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Competing Political Spaces in Colonial Cyprus, 1931-1950

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Competing Political Spaces in Colonial Cyprus, 1931-1950

By Dimitris Kalantzopoulos

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
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Abstract

The outbreak of the October Revolt in 1931 provided the government in Cyprus with an ideal opportunity to act against its political opponents and repress political activity in the island. But the authoritarian regime failed to dampen the growing political ferment in Cyprus, which would ultimately make British colonial rule unsustainable. This thesis seeks to explore the politicization of Cypriot society and to interpret the discourses and dynamics of the emerging political spaces. In particular, it focuses on three key themes in the making of contemporary Cyprus: first, the confrontation between secular and confessional politics and the consolidation of nationalism in the Greek-Cypriot community; second, the processes through which nationalist politics eventually prevailed within the Turkish-Cypriot community, at the expense of the traditional, pro-British elite; and thirdly, the emergence and consolidation of a 'Left' political space, dominated by the labour movement and AKEL.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s the Orthodox Church sought to claim an ethnarchic leadership over the Greek-Cypriot community, promoting a nationalist politics, bonded by the claim to *enosis*, or union of Cyprus with Greece. The confessional politics of the community, however, came to be challenged by the gradual formation of a broad secular political space, marked by the foundation of AKEL in 1941. The social and political programme put forward by the party gained great appeal among the Greek-Cypriot population, redefining the politics of the community. However, AKEL employed the increasingly hegemonic nationalist discourse and eventually adopted enosis politics. By 1950 ethnarchic enosis politics had prevailed within the community, demonstrating the state's failure to gain Greek-Cypriots' loyalty.

By contrast, the Muslim traditional pro-British elite lagged behind the rising nationalist politics advocated by a modernist secular Kemalist political force. Despite the Government's attempts to control its appeal, the modernizing leadership had prevailed within the Turkish-Cypriot community by the end of the Second World War. The new leadership called constantly for communal autonomy and for Cyprus' restoration to Turkey if Britain left the island, while its cooperation with the Government would be dependent on the political conjunctures throughout the rest of colonial rule. Faced with the increasingly radical Greek-Cypriot nationalism, the Turkish-Cypriot community was gradually nationalized, as demonstrated at the end of the 1940s.

Nevertheless, some bi-communal cooperation materialized at the grassroots level: throughout the period under scrutiny Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots participated in common labour mobilizations. Despite the Government's legal and administrative precautions and the use of repressive measures, the trade unions, supported by the parties of the Left, managed to organize a mass labour movement appealing to broad sections of Cypriot society across ethnic and religious boundaries. However, the adoption of the enosis politics by AKEL and the hardening of the nationalist politics of both the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot leaderships led to an increasing polarization of Cypriot society on ethnic lines, a process which the labour movement proved unable to avert. By 1950, nationalist politics had prevailed within both communities, leading to the consolidation of the ethnic division of Cypriot society in the following years.

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Introduction: The Historical and Historiographical Background

This study explores the political and social history of Cyprus during the 1930s and 1940s, while also taking into account developments in the second half of the 1920s. The period under consideration is framed between two major events that conventionally define this period of Cypriot history: the revolt of 1931 and the 1950 plebiscite on enosis. This thesis focuses on both the Greek- and the Turkish-Cypriot communities, and particularly seeks to examine how Cypriot society became pervasively politicized, despite the attempts of the British to repress completely (in the 1930s) and control (in the 1940s) political activity on the island. The aim of this study is to view such activity within the context of British colonial policy in Cyprus.

Questions and Objectives of the Thesis

In the summer of 1878, the Ottoman Empire, following a military defeat at the hands of the Russians, signed an agreement with the United Kingdom that ceded the administration of Cyprus to the British Crown. In theory, the British recognized Ottoman sovereignty over the island and undertook to pay the Government in Istanbul an annual Tribute, deducted from local revenue. As the value of Cyprus lay mainly in its strategic importance, which was dramatically reduced after Britain occupied Egypt in 1882, the British did not show much interest in the economic development of the island. Like all British colonies, Cyprus was expected to be financially self-reliant and not become a liability on the treasury. Thus, the British tended to restrict their involvement mainly to judicial and constitutional affairs. British rule established the equality of all Cypriots before the law, regardless of religious identity or social or economic status. The new governing authority also granted a limited freedom of press and introduced representative and semi-representative institutions.¹ Furthermore, the judicial system was reorganized according to English Statute Law, yet the Ottoman Civil Law continued to apply for the Muslim population of the island. With certain exceptions, men over the age of 21 were given the right to vote in

¹ The opening of the first printing office in Cyprus coincided with British arrival in 1878. See Rebecca Bryant, *Imagining the Modern; The Cultures of Nationalism in Cyprus* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 33.

elections for village and town authorities, as well as for representatives in a central Legislative Council.

The new administrative structure introduced by the British contributed to the gradual redefinition of power structures on the island and facilitated the politicization of local society over time. Until the end of the First World War, the relatively limited local political activity was generally not impeded by the government, as long as public order was not disturbed. The general permissiveness of this period stemmed from the overall indifference of the British Government towards the internal affairs of Cyprus. As Britain's own strategic and political interest in the island diminished, the main preoccupation of the Cyprus Government was the maximization and parsimonious management of tax revenue. The British authorities even tolerated the Greek-Cypriot elite's frequent calls for a union with Greece, although these appeals were either rejected without discussion or completely ignored.

On 5 November 1914, following the Ottoman entry into the First World War on the side of the Central Powers, Cyprus was formally annexed by Britain. A year later in October 1915, the British offered to cede Cyprus to Greece, in exchange for the latter's engagement in the war on the side of the Triple Entente, an offer Greece declined. The strategic value of Cyprus, however, increased significantly after the war within the context of Britain's new imperial considerations. In July 1923, under the Treaty of Lausanne, the newly founded Republic of Turkey officially recognized British sovereignty over the island and two years later, in May 1925, Cyprus was declared a Crown Colony.

This official change of the island's legal status signalled the determination of colonial authorities to abandon their prior *laissez-faire* policy in local affairs and politics, a shift that was initiated after the end of the war. Despite the abolition of the Tribute in 1927, a move that somewhat appeased the local population, this period witnessed an increase in popular discontent. This can be attributed mainly to a series of reforms introduced in the same period that restricted the old autonomy of both the Turkish- and Greek-Cypriot communities. The increasingly intense confrontation over the control of communal affairs between the government and the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot leaderships culminated in 1931. On 9 September the Governor imposed the budgetary estimates for the following year by an Order in Council, overruling the decision of the Legislative Council and triggering a great public outcry. A few weeks later, a spontaneous and

island-wide but solely Greek-Cypriot revolt broke out. The insurgents put forward a heterogeneous set of demands under the slogan of enosis, or union of Cyprus with Greece. The October revolt, quite easily suppressed within a week, was followed by the suspension of constitutional government in the colony. The repeal of the entire semi-liberal institutional framework of the previous period and the imposition of a series of measures that eliminated communal autonomy and suppressed political activities marked the beginning of a period of authoritarian rule that lasted until the Second World War.

The 1931 revolt had a twofold significance for the colonial authorities. On one hand, it constituted the first definite proof of the Cypriot Government's failure to make Cyprus 'a real colony' and transform Cypriots into content British subjects. To that end, the government deployed a new administrative plan with the aim of profoundly reforming Cypriot society, or, as Governor Palmer put it in September 1935, the 'substitution of a British for a Greek atmosphere in the colony'.² In that context, a series of laws were passed in this period, which, among others, forbade the flying of foreign flags and prohibited the ringing of church bells (during the October revolt, bells had been used to assemble Greek-Cypriots). Additionally, the freedom of the press was abolished and strict government control on education was imposed. Most importantly, the government attempted to form a reliable faction of local, pro-British politicians from both communities. That strategy was in the end largely successful, especially if compared to the government's attempts to cultivate loyalty to the British among the Greek-Cypriot population. The total abolition of electoral procedures was a precondition for the implementation of this policy goal. The members of the Advisory Council, which was established in 1933 in place of the Legislative Council, and of the district and municipal councils, were appointed directly by the Governor. Agreement with government policy therefore became a main prerequisite for those aspiring to public office.

At the same time, the October revolt provided the government with an ideal opportunity to implement a series of measures against its political opponents, many of which had been debated in British official circles before the revolt, and suppress all political activity on the island. Immediately after the suppression of the revolt, the British took action against

² National Archives, London [hereafter NA], FO 371/19511, *Greece*, Meeting notes from the Colonial Office, 5 September 1935.

communists, the Church and Greek-Cypriot nationalist politicians who did not collaborate with the government.

From the beginning of colonial rule, the Orthodox Church strove to maintain within the new administrative and political framework the same level of political power it had enjoyed during the Ottoman period, in order to maintain its position as the leadership of the Greek-Cypriot community. To that end, the prelates were forced not only to politicize their discourse, but also to participate directly in the elections for the Legislative Council. Furthermore, as the position of the lay element was strengthened under secular British rule, the clergy moved to appropriate part of the lay discourse and gradually put forward a more dynamic set of policies. By the end of the nineteenth century, and especially after 1910, the demand for enosis had become a major component of the political discourse of the Church. Although the union with Greece was, by definition, anti-colonial, as was mentioned before, the British did not pay much attention to these claims. This was provided so long that the instigators limited themselves to a policy of petitions that were posed simply as aspirations for the future. From 1925, the Church gradually hardened its stance against the colonial government, in an attempt to secure its position as the sole and undisputed national authority of the Greek-Cypriots – a role that became known as the *ethnarchy* of the community.³ This process culminated in late 1931 with the resignation of the Bishop of Kition from the Legislative Council, followed by the resignations of all his Greek-Cypriot counterparts on 21 October, when the revolt broke out. Immediately after the suppression of the revolt, the colonial government deported two of the island's three bishops. In the following years, a series of laws deprived the Church of its control over communal affairs such as education, and intervened within its internal affairs, most notably in the archiepiscopal elections.

In the same spirit, harsh measures were taken against the Κομμουνιστικόν Κόμμα Κύπρου (Communist Party of Cyprus, hereafter KKK), which was considered a 'growing menace' to British rule on the island.⁴ Officially founded in 1926, the KKK stood for the ending of colonial rule, but did not endorse the cause of enosis, preferring instead the establishment of an independent, socialist republic. Its policies questioned the confessional politics of the Greek-

³ Ethnarch: the leader and personified authority of the nation.

⁴ NA, FCO 141/2455, *Cyprus: spread of communism in the colony; measures taken for its suppression*, Attorney General's memorandum on the Cyprus Criminal Code (Amendment) Law, 4 March 1933.

and Turkish-Cypriot elites, attempting to fashion an all-Cypriot political space, and developing a political discourse that called both Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots to the struggle for liberation from colonial rule. During the second half of the 1920s, the party began to spread among the emerging working class in the towns and mining areas, leading the mobilization of labour, and giving shape to a nascent labour movement. Within a few days of the 1931 revolt, the government arrested many leading figures of the party. By early November, two cadres, including the General Secretary, were deported and 50 others were imprisoned, banished, or internally exiled. By 1933, almost all known party cadres had been arrested, tried on charges of seditious conspiracy and sentenced to various punishments. In the same year, the government banned the KKK and all organizations affiliated to it.

Furthermore, the British sought to restrict the influence of Kemalist modernist politicians, whose growing appeal within the Turkish-Cypriot community had alarmed the government since the late 1920s. Despite increased government control on Turkish-Cypriot communal affairs, with respective measures first imposed during the second half of the 1920s, the influence of new political ideas became increasingly apparent, to the detriment of the traditionalist pro-government Turkish-Cypriot elite, and to the concern of the colonial authorities. In 1930, the success of the modernists in the elections made clear to the Legislative Council that the Turkish-Cypriot leadership's cooperation with the government could no longer be taken for granted. On many occasions, the cooperation of Turkish-Cypriot deputies with their Greek-Cypriot counterparts created a deadlock in the Legislative Council, forcing the government to legislate by Orders in Council. Following the 1931 revolt and the abolition of that body, the government assigned the administration of all communal affairs to leading figures of the traditionalist Turkish-Cypriot elite. The government also took measures to counter the growing nationalist sentiment within the community that was promoted by the modernists, such as banning in Turkish-Cypriot schools the use of textbooks produced in Turkey.

The government's strategy in the 1930s enjoyed a certain degree of success. The traditionalist Turkish-Cypriot elite as well as a great part of the Greek-Cypriot elite, having no other way to exercise authority over their respective communities, were willing to collaborate with the colonial authorities and take up the positions reserved for them. Moreover, the harsh implementation of the government's repressive measures succeeded to a great extent in blocking

mass political mobilization in the colony. Throughout the 1930s, however, the political forces that opposed the regime continued to gain ground among the population, revealing the failure of the government to gain the confidence of the general public. This trend would be vividly manifested during the war years, when home and international developments led to the lifting of many repressive measures. In 1943, the results of the municipal elections, marked by the success of the Leftists and the Turkish-Cypriot modernists, alarmed the government as well as the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot elites.

By the end of the Second World War, nationalist politics had been significantly reinforced within both communities. In the case of the Greek-Cypriot community the new party of the Left, the Ανορθωτικό Κόμμα Εργαζόμενου Λαού (Progressive Party of the Working People – AKEL), eventually adopted the hegemonic enosist discourse. Greek-Cypriot nationalist politics overall had become more homogeneous, and the Church had solidified its place as the leadership of the community and the national-liberation struggle. At the same time, the modernist camp, now prevalent within the Turkish-Cypriot community, put forward a dynamic nationalist discourse that demanded Cyprus be returned to Turkey in the case that Britain left the island. Nevertheless, the revival of Cypriot political life in the early 1940s was marked by the dynamics of a political force that challenged nationalist politics. A mass labour movement, which had been growing in strength since the second half of the 1930s and was led to a great extent by the Left, had consolidated its position in local society during the war years, and sought to reshape the political landscape of the colony. By putting forward the demands of the Cypriot working class, the labour movement brought together large parts of the population across ethnic and religious boundaries. As such, the movement constituted the main space of cooperation between Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots, and rejected, or at least downplayed, the importance of the nationalist discourse in both communities.

Recognizing the 1931 revolt as a turning point in Cypriot political life, and in that sense concurring with the existing literature on the Cyprus Question, this thesis offers a broader social analysis of a very turbulent period, and highlights trends within both Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot communities that have been hitherto largely neglected. This study examines the emergence of agents old and new that formed distinct and competing political spaces in Cypriot politics. In

other words, this thesis seeks to explore conduits of politicization in Cypriot society and to interpret the discourses and dynamics that helped shape the emerging political spaces within their own context. In particular, the thesis focuses on the confrontation between confessional and secular politics and the consolidation of nationalism in the Greek-Cypriot community. Another primary concern is the process in which nationalist politics eventually prevailed within the Turkish-Cypriot community, at the expense of the traditionalist pro-British elite. Finally, this thesis examines the emergence and consolidation of a Leftist political space, dominated by the parties of the Left - KKK and AKEL - and the labour movement. While domestic actors tended to redefine their positions according to changing political conjunctures and challenges, the colonial government, despite variations in its short-term objectives, followed a generally consistent policy. Although the significance of the island was subject to the changing priorities of the British imperial project, all administrations of the period sought to gain the allegiance of the island's population. Together with analyzing domestic Cypriot politics, the present study investigates the overall colonial policy on the island, with an eye to Britain's broader imperial considerations. This thesis is thus a comprehensive study of the political and social history of Cyprus in the 1930s and 1940s as well as, more broadly, a contribution to British imperial history.

Historiography and Literature Review

Cyprus has stimulated the attention of researchers from a variety of academic fields, most notably History, International Relations, Anthropology, Sociology and Political Science. Despite the existence of many important scholarly works, however, the history of Cyprus remains inadequately studied. Much like the island itself since 1974, its history has been largely divided into *Greek* and *Turkish* narratives. By considering the nation as the main historical agent, such narratives ignore the significance of other analytical categories, such as class and gender, and omit broader perspectives that would approach Cyprus as part of the history of Eastern Mediterranean, or the history of European imperialism. Until the mid-1970s, historiography on Cyprus remained completely within the nationalist framework of interpretation. Trapped within a historical paradigm of ethnocentric, moralistic and politically biased narratives that dealt solely

with the history of *Greeks* or the history of *Turks* on the island, Cypriot history appeared as a history of mistakes, omissions, lost opportunities, betrayals and violence.⁵

Since 1974, when the reunification of a divided Cyprus became the main Greek-Cypriot political goal, a different paradigm has emerged in Greek-Cypriot historiography. It legitimizes reunification by suggesting that ‘the past proves that the two communities (or the Cypriot people) can live together in the future’ and arguing that the two communities coexisted peacefully during the period before the rise of nationalism.⁶ Nevertheless, the publication of studies espousing the pre-1974 historiographical paradigm continued,⁷ while, on the Turkish-Cypriot side, where the official policy of partition was maintained, nationalist historical narratives remained dominant.⁸

Rather than employing an approach which subordinates historical events and processes to a predetermined historical plot, this thesis shall allow – or arrange – them to speak for themselves. In particular, the present study examines the development of certain political and social dynamics that defined the historical realities on the island and set the stage for subsequent historical developments, including the ethnic divide in Cypriot society. The thesis mainly focuses on domestic political actors and the policy of the colonial authorities. Thus, together with

⁵ See Costas Kyrris, *Η Κύπρος μεταξύ Ανατολής και Δύσεως σήμερα* [Cyprus between East and West today] (Nicosia: Kosmos, 1964); Theodoros Papadopoulos, *Το εθνολογικόν πρόβλημα του ελληνισμού εις την Κυπριακήν αυτού φάσιν* [The ethnological problem of Hellenism in its Cypriot phase] (Nicosia: Publications of Cyprus Studies no. 2, 1964); Vergi Bedevi, *Kıbrıs tarihi* [The History of Cyprus] (Nicosia: Halkın Sesi, 1966).

⁶ Mete Hatay and Yiannis Papadakis, ‘A critical comparison of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot official historiographies’, in Rebecca Bryant and Yiannis Papadakis (eds.), *Cyprus and the politics of memory: History, Community and Conflict* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 37. The most influential scholars within the Greek-Cypriot ‘historiography of peaceful coexistence’ are Paschalis Kitromilides and Michael Attalides. See particularly their articles in Michael Attalides (ed.), *Cyprus Reviewed* (Nicosia: Jus Cypri Association, 1977): Michael Attalides ‘The Turkish Cypriots, their relations to the Greek Cypriots in perspective’; and Paschalis Kitromilides ‘From coexistence to confrontation: the dynamics of ethnic conflict in Cyprus’. See also Paschalis Kitromilides, ‘The dialectic of intolerance: ideological dimensions of the ethnic conflict’, in Peter Worsley and Paschalis Kitromilides (eds.), *Small States in the Modern World: The Conditions of Survival* (Nicosia: The New Cyprus Association, 1979); Paschalis Kitromilides, “‘Imagined Communities’ and the origins of the national question in the Balkans”, *East European Quarterly* 19/2 (1989), 149-172; and Paschalis Kitromilides, ‘Greek irredentism in Asia Minor and Cyprus’, *Middle Eastern Studies* 26/1 (1990), 3-15.

⁷ See Stavros Panteli, *A History of Cyprus; From Foreign Domination to Troubled Independence* (London: East-West Publications, 2000, [1984]; Yiorgos Leventis, *Cyprus: The Struggle for Self-Determination in the 1940s: Prelude to Deeper Crisis* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2002).

⁸ See Fikret Alasya, *Kıbrıs Tarihi ve Kıbrıs’da Türk Eserleri* [The History of Cyprus and Turkish Works of art in Cyprus] (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1977); Fikret Alasya, *Tarihte Kıbrıs* [Cyprus in History] (Nicosia: Ulus Ofset, 1988); Vehbi Serter, *Kıbrıs Tarihi* [The History of Cyprus] (Nicosia: KEMA, 1999).

suggesting an interpretative narrative for the period under scrutiny, it seeks to draw conclusions on the British colonial system as well.

The great majority of studies on Cypriot history deal with the last years of British rule (1955-1960) and the post-independence period, while studies of the colonial period before the outbreak of the anti-colonial revolt led by EOKA are few. This lacuna can be attributed to the great social and political significance that the Cyprus question retains on the island to this day. The question has gone through various phases and adopted multiple aspects, including anti-colonial struggle, inter-ethnic and intra-communal conflict, postcolonial instability, warfare and foreign interventions. Having directly involved four states (Cyprus, Greece, Turkey and Britain) and the United Nations while further triggering the engagement (mainly in the 1970s) of the USA and the USSR, the question has been elevated to the status of a major international issue.⁹

Until recently, the majority of studies on the colonial history of Cyprus were mainly preoccupied with the discrete periods 1878-1931 and 1955-1960, respectively, the period from the British occupation of the island to the October revolt and the period from the beginning of the EOKA's military campaign to independence of Cyprus. Similar to the more general history of the British Empire, the 1930s is probably the most understudied period in Cypriot colonial history. Fortunately, several substantial works on the period 1931-1955 have recently been published, yet still leave a number of themes and issues neglected. The present study contributes to bridging an important historiographical gap and, by taking into consideration and advancing the premises of recent literature, offers a novel historiographic narrative for the period under scrutiny.

Despite the growing interest in the colonial history of Cyprus, the overwhelming majority of existing works deal mainly with the Greek-Cypriot community. This myopic view can only partially be attributed to the fact that most authors come from an English or Greek linguistic and educational background, thus limiting their access to Turkish primary sources. In fact, English-language documents are sufficient for the reconstitution of the basic trends and events of the history of the Turkish-Cypriot community. Rather, the dominant focus on the Greek-Cypriot

⁹ For an outline of the Cyprus Question, see Rebecca Bryant and Yiannis Papadakis, 'Introduction: Modalities of Time, History and Memory in Ethnonational Conflicts', in Rebecca Bryant and Yiannis Papadakis (eds.), *Cyprus and the Politics of Memory*, 4-6. For the core literature on the Question, see Paschalis Kitromilides, 'Milestones in the Historiography of the Cyprus Question', *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique*, 1 (2008), 287-292.

community in existing scholarship should be attributed to the ongoing binary division of the history of Cyprus into two defined sides, one Greek (or Greek-Cypriot) and the other Turkish (or Turkish-Cypriot). This very dichotomy has made the history of one side almost invisible, or meaningless, to the other. A national historiography, of which that reflecting Greek-Cypriot and Greek views is the most copious, tends to obscure the role of other historical agents, especially Turkish-Cypriots, who are strikingly absent from most Greek-Cypriot accounts. Among these works, the few references to the Turkish-Cypriot community mostly restrict themselves to the emergence of Turkish-Cypriot nationalism, and even that is usually considered as completely absent until the late 1940s and as the direct product of Britain's divide-and-rule policy and Turkey's intervention in the 1950s.¹⁰ This thesis addresses this blind spot in the existing literature, considering that the absence of the Turkish-Cypriot community in the historical record essentially makes the interpretation of Cypriot colonial history incomplete so far.

Alexis Rappas' account constitutes the most in-depth historical narrative of the 1930s.¹¹ Rappas deals with the politics of the Greek-Cypriot community and the British colonial policy on the island by examining the immediate and long-term consequences of the 1931 revolt. He contends that the creation of political cleavages, from which opposition to colonial rule emerged, set the tone for the radical rift between the Greek-Cypriot community and the colonial authorities in the following years. His conclusions regarding the contradictions inherent in the functioning of the colonial state and the emergence of new ideologies serve as points upon which this study seeks to elaborate. That is, this thesis aims to examine closely two significant yet neglected themes of the period: the role of the KKK in Cypriot political life as well as the gradual prevalence of Kemalist modernist politics and the advance of nationalism within the Turkish-Cypriot community.

¹⁰ Indicatively, according to Adamantia Pollis the Turkish-Cypriot community remained indifferent to enosis even after the appeal of the Greek Government to the United Nations in 1954. Similarly, Michael Attalides places the intensification of 'Turkish nationalism in Cyprus' in the mid-1950s. Adamantia Pollis, 'Intergroup conflict and British Colonial Policy: The Case of Cyprus', *Comparative Politics*, 5/4 (1973), 575-599; Michael Attalides, 'Οι σχέσεις των Ελληνοκυπρίων με τους Τουρκοκύπριους [The relations of Greek-Cypriots with Turkish-Cypriots]', in Yiorgos Tenekides and Giannos Kranidiotes (eds.) *Κύπρος: Ιστορία, προβλήματα και αγώνες του λαού της* [Cyprus: History, problems and struggles of its people] (Athens: Estia, 1981), 421.

¹¹ Alexis Rappas, *Cyprus in the 1930s: British Colonial Rule and the Roots of the Cyprus Conflict* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014).

Anastasia Yiangou's *Cyprus in World War II*,¹² which is based on previously unexplored archival material, offers a very detailed analysis of the period of the Second World War. Yiangou particularly focuses on the revival of enosis as a political object, the emergence of AKEL and the impact of developments in Greek politics on Cyprus. The significance of the war for Cypriot politics and British administrative planning on the island are further analysed in the current study, by highlighting two crucial political developments of the war years: the partial liberalization of colonial rule (thanks to the lifting of many measures of the previous period), and the challenge posed to the traditionalist, confessional politics within both the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot communities, signified by the growing appeal of AKEL and the prevalence of the modernist Turkish-Cypriot leadership.

The events following the Second World War have been examined by Rolandos Katsiaounis, who also provides a substantial contextualization within the pre-war colonial history of the island. Katsiaounis offers an interpretation of the events leading to the formation and dissolution of the Consultative Assembly, taking into account almost all accessible archival material. Katsiaounis' research focuses on British internal debates and moves on granting Cyprus a Constitution and on their impact on Cypriot politics.¹³ This study expands on Katsiaounis' work by focusing on two un-addressed developments in post-war Cypriot political history: the decrease of AKEL's appeal and the consolidation of ethnarchic politics within the Greek-Cypriot community on the one hand, and the inauguration of a new period of close cooperation between the Turkish-Cypriot leadership and the government on the other.

Political developments in the 1940s have constituted the main subject of yet another book and a PhD thesis. Yiorgos Leventis offers the first systematic narrative of the 1940s, yet his approach remains mostly factual and is further hampered by the denial of the historical agency of the Turkish-Cypriot community:

It is true, however, that during this period [the 1940s], the Turkish Cypriots had yet to become protagonists in the Cyprus drama. Quite simply, the Greek-Cypriots ... largely overlooked the wishes of the leadership of the Turkish Cypriot minority... Yet, it was a reflection of the political realities existing during

¹² Anastasia Yiangou, *Cyprus in World War II: Politics and Conflict in the Eastern Mediterranean* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2010 [2012]).

¹³ Rolandos Katsiaounis, *Η Διασκεπτική 1946-1948, Με ανασκόπηση της περιόδου 1878-1945 [The Consultative Assembly of 1946-48, With a Review of the Period 1878-1945]* (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2000).

the 1930s and 1940s, a period in which the Turkish Cypriots were, for the most part, apparently reacting to Greek Cypriot advances toward the declared goal of *enosis*.¹⁴

By comparison, Alexis Alekou's PhD thesis offers a much more substantial and comprehensive analysis of the 1940s, yet it neglects British policy on the island and the policies of the colonial administration, being based almost exclusively on Greek-language primary sources, and takes no account of the Cyprus State Archive documents.¹⁵

Particular aspects of the history of the period under discussion have also been examined by several thematic studies, most of which cover a longer period of time. Most importantly, Sotos Ktoris has published the most thorough study on the history of the Turkish-Cypriot community from the foundation of the Republic of Turkey to Cypriot independence.¹⁶ His conclusions on the emergence of Turkish-Cypriot nationalism have been significantly useful for the examination of how a particular type of Kemalist nationalist politics eventually dominated the community. Altay Nevzat's PhD thesis deals mainly with the period 1878-1931.¹⁷ Although he provides a less accurate account on the emergence of Turkish-Cypriot nationalism when compared to Ktoris, Nevzat offers substantial information on certain un-addressed issues, most significantly the impact of early British rule and of the Young Turk movement on Turkish-Cypriot communal politics in the early twentieth century.¹⁸ On the same theme, James McHenry's book and Daniel Wosgian's PhD thesis deal mainly with Britain's and Turkey's policies regarding the Turkish-Cypriot community, without providing much further elaboration on its political history.¹⁹

¹⁴ Leventis, *Cyprus: The Struggle for Self-Determination in the 1940s: Prelude to Deeper Crisis* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2002), 26. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁵ Alexis Alekou, 'Οι πολιτικές εξελίξεις στην Κύπρο, 1945-1955 [The Political Developments in Cyprus, 1945-1955]' (Panteio Univ. of Social and Political Sciences D.Phil Thesis, 2011).

¹⁶ Sotos Ktoris, *Τουρκοκύπριοι: Από το περιθώριο στο συνεταιρισμό (1923-1960)* [*Turkish-Cypriots: From the margins to partnership (1923-1960)*] (Athens: Papazisis Publications, 2013).

¹⁷ Altay Nevzat, 'Nationalism amongst the Turks of Cyprus: The First Wave' (University of Oulu D.Phil Thesis, 2005).

¹⁸ Aspects of the history of the Turkish-Cypriot community are also examined in Eleni Mpouleti's PhD thesis: 'Η αγγλική πολιτική απέναντι στην τουρκοκυπριακή κοινότητα 1878-1950. Η πορεία προς την εθνοποίηση της μουσουλμανικής-κυπριακής κοινότητας [English policy towards the Turkish-Cypriot community. The route towards the nationalization of the Muslim-Cypriot community]' (Panteio University D.Phil Thesis, 2008), which also deals mainly also with the period 1878-1931.

¹⁹ James McHenry, *The Uneasy Partnership on Cyprus, 1919-1939; The Political and Diplomatic Interaction between Great Britain, Turkey, and the Turkish Cypriot Community* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1987); Daniel Wosgian, 'Turks and British Rule in Cyprus' (Columbia University D.Phil Thesis, 1963).

The Cypriot Left has been the subject of several historical and sociological studies, each discussing different periods or aspects. Andreas Panayiotou's PhD thesis provides the most complete sociological analysis of the activity of the Left during British rule.²⁰ Based mostly on secondary sources, Panayiotou examines the systemic origins and the political, cultural and organizational aspects of the communist movement in Cyprus, as related to other cases of popular movements. Furthermore, trade unionism and the labour movement are thoroughly examined by Sotiroula Moustaka in her PhD thesis.²¹ Although based extensively on primary sources, the study does not provide an interpretative context for the significance of the labour movement and the Left in reshaping Cypriot politics, nor does it account for the formation of a mass, secular, anti-colonial political space, which constituted the main locus of cooperation between the Greek- and the Turkish-Cypriot communities. Given that the thesis is the only historiographical work which covers the subject extensively and that the remaining studies on the subject are essentially biographical accounts of trade union leaders, the history of the Cypriot labour movement remains only partially explored. Yiannos Katsourides has contributed to the literature on the Cypriot Left by analyzing the politics of the KKK, mostly during the period from the mid-1920s to the 1931 revolt.²² Lastly, Thomas Adams has published a heavily biased account that reflects the anticommunism of the Cold War period; his *AKEL: The Communist Party of Cyprus*, deals mainly with the politics and appeal of AKEL in the 1960s, and its perception by the other political forces.²³ Despite the major contribution of these studies to the history of the Left and the labour movement, a distinctively historical and contextualizing approach of their significance for Cypriot society and politics during 1931-1960 has not yet been attempted. The present study seeks to contribute to bridging this gap and providing a narrative for the period between 1925 and 1950.

A number of important studies cover the impact of British imperial policy and local administration on Cyprus, and place colonial rule on the island into a broader historical context.²⁴

²⁰ Andreas Panayiotou, 'Island radicals: The emergence and consolidation of the Cypriot Left, 1920-1960' (University of California D. Phil Thesis, 1999).

²¹ Sotiroula Moustaka, 'Το Εργατικό Κίνημα στην Κύπρο την περίοδο της Αγγλοκρατίας 1878-1955 [The Labour Movement in Cyprus in the period of British rule 1878-1955]' (Panteio University D.Phil, 2010).

²² Yiannos Katsourides, *The History of the Communist Party in Cyprus: Colonialism, Class and the Cypriot Left* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014).

²³ Thomas Adams, *AKEL: The Communist Party of Cyprus* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1971).

²⁴ Robert Holland and Diana Markides, *The British and the Hellenes: Struggles for Mastery in the Eastern Mediterranean 1850-1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), see particularly chapters 7 and 9; Georgios

The impact of British colonial rule on the island's power structures and the formation of nationalist ideologies within the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot communities are thoroughly examined by Rebecca Bryant in her historical anthropological study *Imagining the Modern: The Cultures of Nationalism in Cyprus*.²⁵ Her conceptualization of the fundamental differences between the Greek- and the Turkish-Cypriot nationalisms helps to trace the process through which nationalist politics eventually prevailed within both communities. Nevertheless, Bryant's account focuses mainly on education, giving little attention to other factors, such as the press, while significant ideological components and aspects of Turkish-Cypriot nationalism, most notably the irredentist element becoming manifest after the late 1940s, are neglected.

Finally, there are a number of works which deal with government educational policy and its impact on the Greek-Cypriot community. Panayiotis Persianis provides some useful information on the role of the Church, yet fails to capture how political developments in the Greek-Cypriot community affected educational policies.²⁶ A greater emphasis on the policy of the British is given by Constantinos Spyridakis, a prominent nationalist and Head of the Pan-Cypriot Gymnasium from 1936 to 1960 in a politically biased study.²⁷ The Greek-Cypriot educational system and its interaction with the shifting political situation on the island are thoroughly examined by Antigone Heraclidou in her PhD thesis.²⁸ Heraclidou offers a detailed analysis of British attempts to Anglicize education and the reaction of the Greek-Cypriot leadership. Considering the colonial authorities' educational policy as a major part of their overall post-1925 policy to reduce communal autonomy and control the advance of nationalism – in a way that produced distinct, yet similar results in both the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot cases, this study approaches the question of education within this context, examining more closely government interventions in Turkish-Cypriot educational affairs.

As this outline has shown, there are important lacunae in the existing literature on Cypriot history during the 1930s and 1940s. The present study seeks therefore to reconstitute this

Georghallides and Diana Markides, 'British Attitudes to Constitution-Making in Post-1931 Cyprus', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 13/1 (1995), 63-81; and George Kelling, *Countdown to Rebellion: British policy in Cyprus 1939-1955* (New York: 1990).

²⁵ Bryant, *Imagining the Modern*, 2004.

²⁶ Panayiotis Persianis, *Church and State in Cyprus Education* (Nicosia, 1978).

²⁷ Constantinos Spyridakis, *The Educational Policy of the English Government in Cyprus: 1878-1954* (Nicosia, 1954).

²⁸ Antigone Heraclidou, 'Politics of Education in Colonial Cyprus, 1931-1956, with special reference to the Greek-Cypriot community' (Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, D.Phil Thesis, 2011).

significant and hitherto only partially explored period. On the one hand, the aim is to contribute to bridging the historiographical gap on the political and social history of the island. On the other hand, this study intends to depart from a traditionalist historiographical perspective that conceptualized the two communities as homogeneous and completely segregated, and instead situates instances of intra-communal division and inter-communal cooperation within their own historical contexts.

Methodology and Sources

As discussed, the scope of the present thesis is essentially twofold, consisting, on the one hand, of suggesting a broad reappraisal of Cypriot history during the period 1931-1950, and, at the same time, of examining Cypriot history as a case study of British colonialism. Furthermore, the interpretation of the discourses that dominated the political spaces emerging during this period requires that they be examined on their own terms. Most notably, even though both Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots were faced with the erosion of communal autonomy during the 1920s, the two communities were largely treated differently by the British. Moreover, the rise of nationalism among Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots made the two communities increasingly introverted, even though there was still a high degree of interaction between the two groups.

The present structure of this thesis approaches the interactions and competitions among different political projects in a systematic manner. On a first level, the approach employed is necessarily a synthetic one, as the interaction between both the colonial authorities and Cypriot society as well as between the two communities played a major part in shaping Cypriot politics. On a second level, the thesis is organized thematically: following the first chapter, which deals with the early period of British rule on the island, the next two chapters examine the politics of the Greek- and the Turkish-Cypriot communities respectively, while the last chapter focuses on the forms and dynamics of bi-communal politics.

The thesis is based on research in a wide range of English-, Greek- and Turkish-language primary sources held in the United Kingdom, Cyprus and Greece. In the United Kingdom the greatest part of the research was conducted in the National Archives at Kew. Study of the official correspondence between the Colonial Office and the Cyprus Government (Colonial Office

records – CO 67) allowed for the reconstruction of a major part of the events analysed in the thesis, and also yielded insight into the logic and operation of the colonial administration. Special attention was given to non-official documents – such as memoranda, newspaper articles, trade union resolutions and other documents mainly of Cypriot origin – attached to the despatches of administrators in Cyprus to the Colonial Office, so as to ensure that the suggested historical narrative does not reproduce the official version. Overall, the majority of official and non-official documents were cross-checked, through studying different sources on the same subjects.

Extra care was taken to survey the records of former colonial administrations (Foreign and Commonwealth Office records – FCO 141), that is the migrated archives, kept secret until 2012 and released from April of the same year to November 2013.²⁹ Among the 2,860 records that relate to Cyprus, 816 cover the period 1925-1949, while the bulk of the material dates from the 1950s and concentrates on 1955-1959 (the period of the Cyprus Emergency). Additionally, records from the Foreign Office (FO 371), the Cabinet Office (CAB), the Mediterranean Department (CO 926), and the Confidential Correspondence (CO 537 and CO 883) have proven useful for this study. Lastly, British Parliamentary Papers and reports of proceedings in the House of Commons and the House of Lords have assisted in examining imperial considerations and debates on the status of Cyprus, as well as controversies over its administration.

In Cyprus, the official archives of the Cyprus Government (Secretariat Archives - SA1), held at the Cyprus State Archive in Nicosia, were particularly useful. Their significance and treatment in this thesis are equal to those of the Colonial Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office records. Furthermore, the archives of the Cypriot press constitute a very important corpus of material. Studying articles from newspapers that cover the entirety of the political spectrum has allowed for the reconstruction of political developments and public debates. This is especially valid for the 1940s, less so for the previous period, as newspapers were subject to

²⁹ This archive, kept secret by the British Government, contained 19,950 files and volumes from 41 former colonies, which were sent back to Britain on the eve of decolonization. The records cover a wide range of information relating to colonial administration, yet a major part of them consist of incriminating evidence. A great many similar documents were destroyed, either in the colonies themselves or at some point after their despatch to Britain to avoid disclosure and subsequent embarrassment to the British Government. See Richard Drayton, 'Britain's secret archive of decolonization', *History Workshop Online* (19 April 2012); The National Archives, 'Colonial administration records: The "Migrated Archives" – record series FCO 141', <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/colonial-administration-records.htm>, accessed 3 September 2015; The National Archives, 'Foreign and Commonwealth Office and predecessors: Records of Former Colonial Administrations: Migrated Archives', <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C12269323>, accessed 3 September 2015.

strict censorship in the aftermath of the 1931 revolt and throughout the 1930s. Periodicals and other publications often contain valuable material on certain institutions of Cypriot society, from Church circulars to trade union proclamations. Greek-Cypriot newspapers and periodicals are held in the Library of Archbishop Makarios III Foundation and the Public Information Office (PIO) in Nicosia. Turkish-Cypriot newspapers and periodicals are held in the Cyprus (Turkish) National Archive in Kyrenia and the National Library within the Atatürk Cultural Centre in Nicosia. Finally, the records held by the Pan-Cypriot Labour Federation (PEO), Nicosia, contain important documents and periodicals – the most valuable of them in often forgotten and dusty boxes - hitherto untouched after being donated by trade unions and individuals. These include the proceedings of trade union conferences, trade union charters, KKK/AKEL party documents and resolutions and personal testimonies and manuscripts.

In Athens, the Contemporary Social History Archives (ASKI) contain valuable information, mainly from the late 1940s, on AKEL and its relations with the Communist Party of Greece (KKE). The correspondence between the two parties and reports by the KKE have been particularly useful for reconstituting the politics of AKEL, especially during and after the period of the Consultative Assembly. Moreover, research was conducted at the City Library, a department of the Library of the Greek Parliament, and the Diplomatic and Historical Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (IAYE).

Given that there are only a few original documents produced by the KKK and AKEL that are accessible to researchers, a great part of the material on the two parties comes from the press, the migrated archives and the collections of ASKI.

Lastly, various published primary sources have been used, such as the *Cyprus Gazette*, the *Cyprus Blue Book*, international conventions, treaties and party conferences decisions, among others.

Plan of the Thesis

As discussed above, the structure of this study reflects the material under scrutiny, so as to capture the interactions between the colonial administration and the local population as well as

between the Greek- and the Turkish-Cypriot communities. This inevitably results in a degree of overlap between the chapters, while British policy is examined throughout. The thesis is composed of four thematic chapters, each broadly chronological in structure.

Chapter 1 provides the background of the historical processes analysed in the thesis and examines the impact of early British rule (1878-1931) on Cypriot politics. The administrative and political framework initially adopted by the British followed closely the administrative practices of the Ottomans, allowing the traditional Orthodox and Muslim confessional elites to maintain their power. At the same time, the secularization of the government and the introduction of representative institutions facilitated the emergence of new political actors, initially from within the Greek-Cypriot community. The redefinition of Cypriot politics became increasingly apparent during the 1920s, and led to the outbreak of the October revolt in 1931, which marked the beginning of a new period in Cypriot colonial history.

Chapter 2 explores the tensions between confessional and secular politics and the consolidation of the dominant position of nationalist discourse within the Greek-Cypriot community. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, the Orthodox Church, as the main propagator of Greek nationalism on the island, strove to secure its leading position within the community (its ethnarchic role) not least by putting forward demands for enosis. This goal would be achieved by the beginning of the next decade, despite two major challenges to the political power of the Church. In the aftermath of the 1931 revolt and for most of the period under examination, the colonial government attempted to restrict the political activities of the Church and control the advance of Greek-Cypriot nationalism. An even greater challenge to the confessional politics came from the broad secular political space of the Left, which had a key influence on Greek-Cypriot political life during a great part of the 1940s. Indeed, the communal elites and the colonial administration were so afraid of the appeal of radical politics on the island that the British would begin to cooperate with the Church against the Left. Nevertheless, the political discourse of the Left became increasingly nationalist after the foundation of AKEL in 1941, leading to the complete adoption of enosis politics by the party and the eventual recognition of the Church as the national leadership of the community. This chapter examines closely the emergence of the Church in its ethnarchic role and the process through which nationalist and enosis politics became consolidated by the late 1940s.

In contrast to the Orthodox Church, the Muslim religious elite proved more vulnerable to the emergence of a secular, nationalist and modernist political force from within the community, following the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. From the late 1920s, the authority of the traditional pro-British Turkish-Cypriot elite gradually declined in the face of a budding modernist intelligentsia that drew inspiration from Kemalist reforms. Chapter 3 deals with the gradual prevalence of nationalist politics within the Turkish-Cypriot community, to the detriment of the traditional elite and the colonial authorities, which attempted to bolster the latter. From the early 1930s until the end of colonial rule, the modernists' cooperation with the colonial government would be dependent on political conjunctures. By the end of the 1940s, Turkish nationalism had consolidated its position in the Turkish-Cypriot community, codified in the claim of Cyprus' return to Turkey in case of any change of the status quo on the island.

Lastly, chapter 4 examines the emergence and consolidation of a political force which challenged the nationalist discourse of both communities. The labour movement and the parties of the Left put forward a radical set of demands ranging from the enactment of labour legislation to the democratization of the administration. Leftist and labour politics succeeded in mobilizing large parts of the working population, regardless of ethnicity and religion, despite the government's legal and administrative precautions and the use of repressive measures. Most importantly, trade unionism, through which the KKK and AKEL channelled a great part of their action, and labour mobilizations constituted the main space of cooperation between the Greek- and the Turkish-Cypriot communities. Growing throughout the period under scrutiny and consolidated by the early 1940s, the bi-communal labour movement managed to secure many demands. The movement, however, eventually failed to avert the ethnic divide in Cypriot society. By the mid-1940s, the hardening of the nationalist politics of both the Greek- and the Turkish-Cypriot leaderships led to a split of the unions into three factions along ideological and ethnic lines, each supported by different political actors. Although the labour movement maintained its bi-communal character throughout the decade, Cypriot society was becoming increasingly polarized along ethnic lines, as would be indicated at the end of the decade and demonstrated in the 1950s.

Chapter 1: British Colonial Rule: The Administrative and Political Context

This chapter discusses the first period of British rule in Cyprus, from the occupation of the island in June 1878 until the 1931 October revolt. It examines the administrative and political context introduced by the British and its impact on Cypriot politics, with the aim of setting the background for the historical developments presented in the following chapters. It is important to note that the British occupiers broadly adopted the administrative practices of their Ottoman predecessors, providing the traditional Christian and Muslim religious elites with the means to maintain their power. At the same time, the secularization of the administration and the introduction of representative institutions contributed to the gradual emergence of new political forces, initially mainly within the Greek-Cypriot community, posing a challenge to the confessional politics on the island. During most of this period, both the Christian and the Muslim traditional elites managed to maintain their supremacy; nevertheless, Cypriot politics was gradually redefined, as would become increasingly apparent during the second half of the 1920s and demonstrated in 1931.

1.1 The Occupation of Cyprus and the British Administrative Framework

Britain's decision to occupy Cyprus in 1878 was motivated by strategic considerations. Ever since the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the strategic importance of Cyprus was greatly enhanced, as it lay on the sea route to India. A base there helped the British secure their imperial lifeline. As the British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli put it,

In taking Cyprus the movement is not Mediterranean; It is Indian. We have taken a step there which we think necessary for the maintenance of our Empire and for its preservation in peace.¹

The British were alarmed by the Russian victory over the Ottoman Empire in the 1877-1878 war and the subsequent signing of the Treaty of San Stefano in March 1878, which secured Russian influence in the Balkans. Providing support to the Ottoman Empire against Russia and

¹ *Hansard, House of Lord Debates*, 241 (18 July 1878), cc. 1753-843.

preventing its dissolution and partition formed the core of British foreign policy in the region for most of the nineteenth century. In that spirit, Whitehall acted to preserve, at least temporarily, Ottoman stability and prevent any further Russian expansion. The Cyprus Convention, signed secretly between the United Kingdom and the Ottoman Empire in June 1878, granted control of Cyprus to the former, in exchange for British support in the case that Russia resumed hostilities. In theory, the Sultan would maintain his *de jure* sovereignty over Cyprus and the British occupation of the island would cease if Russia restored to Turkey certain territories that it had annexed.² Furthermore, Britain agreed to pay the Ottoman Government an annual tribute, equivalent to the excess of revenue over expenditure on the island. British officials, however, from the beginning considered the occupation of Cyprus as permanent, and the island's administration was entrusted to the Colonial Office as early as 1880.³

In May 1878, Disraeli described Cyprus to Queen Victoria as the 'key to Western Asia'.⁴ For Stafford Northcote, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Cyprus was needed as a 'place of arms' in the Levant, as the island's location was seen as ideal for enhancing Britain's ability to oppose a possible Russian attack on Asia Minor.⁵ Furthermore, the occupation of Cyprus would cause less opposition from the other Powers than Gallipoli, Limnos, Lesvos, Astypalaia, Crete, Alexandria, Acre, Haifa or Alexandretta, which had also been considered.⁶ Even at that time, however, the island's strategic significance was doubted by several British politicians, publicists and military experts, mainly due to its relative remoteness from key strategic locations such as the Dardanelles or Istanbul, its bad sanitary state and the lack of necessary infrastructure (such as harbours and railways).⁷ The strategic value of Cyprus was further diminished by the occupation of Egypt in 1882, which gave the British direct control of the Suez Canal and a far more advantageous base in the Eastern Mediterranean. Besides, as Russia abandoned its aggressive

²*The Cyprus Convention, 1878*, Annex to the Convention.

³ In July 1878, Granville Leveson-Gower, 2nd Earl Granville, stated in the House of Lords: 'The promise that Cyprus is to go back to Turkey if Russia gives back what she has got is of a perfectly illusory character. Looking at it as men of business, we must see that the cession of Cyprus is a virtual cession of a portion of the Porte's Dominions'. *Hansard*, *ibid*.

⁴ William Money Penny and George Buckle, *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield* (London: John Murray, 1929), vol. 2, 1163.

⁵ Georgios Georghallides, *A Political and Administrative History of Cyprus 1918-1926 with a Survey of the Foundations of British Rule* (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 1979), 6.

⁶ Holland and Markides, 2008, p. 164.

⁷ See the speeches of Granville Leveson-Gower; Edward Stanley, 15th Earl of Derby; Thomas Baring, 1st Earl of Northbrook; and John Wodehouse, 1st Earl of Kimberley. *Hansard*, *ibid*.

policy of expansion against the Ottoman Empire in Asia Minor, British political and strategic interests in this region as well as the area between Alexandretta and the Persian Gulf diminished. The value of Cyprus in strategic terms was greatly reduced. After 1882, the main British objective became simply to prevent any other power from seizing the island. Cyprus was not of particular use or importance to the British until the end of the First World War.⁸ It remained a base that could potentially defend British military and economic interests in the Asia Minor and Middle East region, but without any intrinsic strategic value as long as British control over Egypt remained uncontested.⁹

Cyprus nominally remained an Ottoman territory administered by the British until the Ottoman Empire entered the First World War on the side of the Central Powers. On 5 November 1914, when the island was annexed by Britain, Egypt, which was also a nominal part of the Ottoman Empire, was declared a British Protectorate. A year later, in October 1915, Britain offered Cyprus to Greece on the condition that the latter would join the war on the side of the Triple Entente, an offer declined by King Constantine I of the Hellenes.¹⁰ After the war, Cyprus saw a significant increase in its strategic importance, as the island then constituted a strategic station between Egypt and the mandates of Palestine, Mesopotamia and Transjordan, which all had been entrusted to Britain by the League of Nations. The island's fate was now dependent on British strategic interests not in India or the Mediterranean, but in the Middle East. In July 1923, the nascent Republic of Turkey formally recognized British sovereignty over Cyprus under the Treaty of Lausanne and renounced any rights to the island. Two years later, in May 1925, Cyprus was declared a Crown Colony, and, in 1927, the Tribute was abolished.

Administrative Planning

⁸ For the strategic importance of Cyprus during British rule and its significance in the management of post-colonial crises in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, see Klearchos Kyriakides, 'The Island of Cyprus and the Projection of Sea Power by the Royal Navy since 1878', in Carmel Vassalo and Michela D'Angelo (eds.), *Anglo-Saxons in the Mediterranean: commerce, politics and ideas (XVII-XX centuries)* (Valletta: Malta University Press, 2007), 219-236.

⁹ In 1887, when a British departure from Egypt was briefly considered, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Lord Salisbury intended to withdraw to Cyprus: Georgiades, 1979, p. 14.

¹⁰ Ibid.

From the beginning of their rule, the British attempted to govern Cyprus by cooperating with the local elites, as the resources available for the administration of the island were, as in all British colonies, limited. In 1900, the population of Cyprus, consisting of 186,000 inhabitants, was administered by 57 British officials.¹¹ As Frederick Lugard, Governor of Hong Kong (1907-1912) and Governor-General of Nigeria (1914-1919), put it in 1922,

If continuity and decentralisation are ... the first and most important conditions in maintaining an effective administration, co-operation is the key-note of success in its application, ... co-operation ... above all between the provincial staff and the native rulers.¹²

Although Cyprus formally remained an Ottoman territory until 1914, the British administered the island from the beginning as a colony. They applied the same administrative system that had been standardized in the British Empire since the early nineteenth century.¹³ The specific administrative structure that was to be applied in Cyprus was determined by an Order in Council issued in September 1878.¹⁴ As in most crown colonies most of the legislative and executive power were vested in a High Commissioner (named Governor after the island officially became a colony), who represented the British sovereign on the island. The High Commissioner was also assisted in the administration of the island by two councils, the Executive and the Legislative. The Executive Council consisted of the highest ranking British officials on the island – the Chief Justice, the Attorney General, the Treasurer and the Chief Secretary – and up to three prominent figures among the local population, appointed by the High Commissioner. The Legislative Council was presided over by the High Commissioner and consisted of four to eight members, half of which were British officials (official members), and the other half selected by the High Commissioner from among the local population (non-official members). The Council had only an advisory role, as the High Commissioner could overrule any legislative proposals by introducing legislation directly from London, through Orders in Council. The High Commissioner was further assisted by the Chief Secretary's Office (from 1925 onward, the Colonial Secretary's Office), which advised the High Commissioner on questions of

¹¹ *Report on the Census of Cyprus, 1881* (London, 1884), p. 6; Georghallides, 1979, p. 14.

¹² Lord Frederick Lugard, *The Dual Mandate In British Tropical Africa* (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1922), 221.

¹³ See John Cell, *British Colonial Administration in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: the Policy-Making Process* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970).

¹⁴ Unless otherwise stated, the administrative structure presented here is based on information derived from the *Cyprus Gazette*, 1878-1884.

general policy. The Secretary's Office was also responsible for ensuring the implementation of the government's decisions and for coordinating between the various administrative departments, such as those of agriculture, education, justice, police and public works.

At the regional level, the British maintained the Ottoman administrative division of the island into six districts, each one administered by a District Commissioner, whose duty was to supervise the coordination between the local branches of government departments in his area of jurisdiction. The British authorities further maintained most regional administrative institutions introduced by their Ottoman predecessors. In particular, the British retained the island's seven *İdare Meclisi*, or administrative councils, one central and one for each district.¹⁵ The Central Administrative Council in Nicosia was presided over by the High Commissioner, who replaced the Ottoman Governor in that capacity. The council was composed from four elective members, two from the Muslim and two from the non-Muslim population. Similarly, each district (previously *kaza*) council was composed of four permanent members (the District Commissioner, the Sharia Judge, the Orthodox Bishop and the Treasury clerk) and four elected members (two Muslim and two non-Muslim). Their responsibilities were soon reduced to granting licenses for the sale of alcohol, examining and approving the work schedule for repairing village roads; and issuing warrants for the seizure and sale of movable property of defaulting taxpayers.¹⁶

Furthermore, the Cyprus Convention provided for the maintenance of two more Ottoman institutions, which exclusively regulated affairs of the Turkish-Cypriot community: the *Sharia* Courts and the *Evkaf*, the Muslim pious foundations that administered a vast number of endowed properties. Despite the significant reduction of their jurisdiction, the religious *Sharia* Courts remained an important institution for Muslims of Cyprus, and continued to regulate matters of property, marriage and inheritance, among others. Equally important, the administration of the *Evkaf* was placed under the dual supervision of an Ottoman and a British delegate.

Finally, a High Court of Justice was founded in 1878, composed of the High Commissioner, a Judicial Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners, to try all criminal and civil

¹⁵ The councils were established in the context of the Tanzimat reforms, introduced in the Ottoman Empire from 1839 to 1876 and in Cyprus in particular since 1840.

¹⁶ Rappas, 'The elusive polity. Social engineering and the reinvention of politics in colonial Cyprus, 1931-1941', (European University Institute D.Phil Thesis, 2008), 27.

cases according to the Statue Law of England, except for those under the jurisdiction of the Sharia Courts. The judicial system was reorganized in 1882. All Ottoman Courts were abolished with the exception of the Sharia Courts, whose jurisdiction was further limited. In their place, the British established a Supreme Court; six Assize Courts, six District Courts, six Magisterial Courts and a number of Village Judge Courts.

Following the 1880 elections in Britain, which brought the Liberals to power, the British reformed the statutes of the Legislative Council in 1882. The new Legislative Council would consist of six British civil servants, nominated by the High Commissioner, and 12 elected members, three of whom were to be elected by the Muslims and nine by the non-Muslims of the island. These representatives would be elected every four years by all male Cypriots aged over 21 who paid property tax. The High Commissioner, who presided over the Council, had the casting vote, and reserved the right to veto any decision of the body. In practice, the distribution of the seats favoured the cooperation between the British and the Muslim members of the Council, as the number of Muslim representatives, added to that of the British appointees, was equivalent to the number of the non-Muslim representatives. The casting vote of the High Commissioner ensured that cooperation between the British members and the Muslim deputies would secure the majority within the Council. In the few cases that no such cooperation was achieved, or in case of a Muslim representative's absence, the government could – and did – legislate through Orders in Council. The composition of the body was slightly changed in 1925, with the number of the non-Muslim representatives raised to 12 and that of the British officials to nine. As previously, the cooperation between the Muslim and the British members could block any suggestion by the non-Muslim representatives. The precarious balance of council politics was frustrating not only to the non-Muslim representatives, but for the British as well, as what they regarded as important government business often got delayed.

Most significantly, the 1882 reform of the Legislative Council combined two main political concepts: on one hand, it maintained the central element of the Ottoman administration's *millet* system, that is, the conceptualization of the Cypriot population as divided into distinct religious groups. At the same time, the British administrative system incorporated the principles of proportional representation, with the number of each community's elected

representatives corresponding to their share of the total population.¹⁷ The very extension of communal division to the highest body of local representation, as well as to the election of the council's elected members, constituted in fact a hardening of the *millet* system. The complete institutionalization of communalism reinforced further the ethno-religious division of Cypriot society, as well as the paternalistic bonds between the Christian and Muslim populations and their respective elites.¹⁸

While the British, by contrast with the Ottomans, did not recognize the political authority of the two communities' religious leaderships as such, the institutionalization of communalism allowed the latter to maintain their political power and safeguard their role within the British administrative context. At the same time, the gradual extension of the principle of representation to all local authorities of the island, from the town councils in 1882 to the village councils in 1906, and the freedom of speech and of the press, granted in 1878 and 1884 respectively, contributed to the politicization of Cypriot society over time.¹⁹

Financial Questions and Communal Autonomy

The partial rationalization of the tax-collecting system, the decrease of corruption and British rigidity in the collection of taxes led to an increase in public revenue, which, was not, however, followed by a general growth in the economy of Cyprus. First, a large part of public revenue was directed to cover the high cost of the colonial bureaucracy. According to the Vice-Consul and manager of the Imperial Ottoman bank, Hamilton Lang, the annual cost of the British

¹⁷ In 1881, the British authorities carried out the first census in Cyprus, based mainly on religion and language. The religion-based system of representation that was applied in Cyprus was soon to be introduced to other British colonial territories as well, such as India in 1909, Ceylon in 1910, and Palestine in 1922. See Martin Wight, *The Development of the Legislative Council 1606-1945* (London: Faber and Faber, 1946), 88.

¹⁸ Communalism was a staple element of the British colonial administrative system in most regions of the Empire. Echoing the very logic of the *millet* administrative functioning, Lugard stressed: "[T]he native authority is thus *de facto* and *de jure* ruler over his own people... [G]overnment, by the use of force if necessary, intends to support the native chief... The essential feature of the system ... is that the native chiefs are constituted 'as an integral part of the machinery of the administration'... [I]t is the consistent aim of the British staff to maintain and increase the prestige of the native ruler ... and to support his authority... The limitations to independence which are ... inherent in this conception of native rule ... are such as do not involve interference with the authority of the chiefs or the social organization of the people" [italics in the original]. Lugard, 1922, pp. 202-205.

¹⁹ Rappas, 2008, p. 35.

administration until 1890 was £110,000, compared to the £40,000 spent by the Ottomans.²⁰ Most importantly, the British Government imposed a levy on revenues from the island equalling the sum of £92,799 a year, which, according to British calculations, represented the Ottoman Government's former profit from the island. The levy amounted to two-thirds of the fiscal returns, and, by 1882-1883, the British Government decided to assist the Cyprus Government by grants-in-aid of £50,000 so that Cyprus would have to provide only £43,000. This sum was in fact used for the payment of the 'Ottoman debt', that is, the debt the Ottoman Government had contracted with British bondholders in 1855 during the Crimean war. It is indicative that, in the first 17 years after the occupation, Britain made a net profit from Cyprus of about £170,000. Between 1878 and 1912, the island lost £1,972,054, or 28% of its budget revenues, while the annual expenditure on forests was restricted to £2000. Education was likewise limited to £3000, and public works to £13,000. By 1927, when the Tribute was abolished, Cyprus had paid to Britain over £2,600,000.²¹

In this context, opposition to taxation and the Tribute was a major point of consensus among Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot members of the Legislative Council, threatening the basis of the British rationale on the composition of the Council, that is, the cooperation of the Turkish-Cypriot deputies with the British officials against their Greek-Cypriot counterparts. Colonial officials themselves urged the metropolitan government to abolish the Tribute, which constituted a constant point of severe criticism by Cypriot politicians and journalists. As the then Under-Secretary of State Winston Churchill wrote in 1907:

Although the most grinding economies were enforced, although all public works were neglected and the whole administration cut down to starvation point, we never succeeded, any more than the Sultan, in squeezing out of them the whole tribute of £92,800. ... [Cyprus] passed under the most rigid Treasury control.²²

Any calls for abolishing the Tribute, however, were bound to be ignored due to the metropolitan Government's position that Cyprus, as any other colony should not burden the British taxpayer in any way and thus had to finance all government spending with its own revenue.

²⁰ Robert Lang, 'Cyprus after twelve years of British Rule', *Macmillan's Magazine* LXIII (1890-1), 20.

²¹ Georghallides, 1979, pp. 27-29.; Rappas, 2008, p. 32; Georgios Georghallides, 'The British Colonial Period', in John Charalambous and Georgios Georghallides, *Focus on Cyprus* (London: University of North London Press, 1993), 54.

²² Cited in Georghallides, 1979, p. 28.

Under these conditions, the economy of Cyprus experienced very low levels of economic growth. The island witnessed some small-scale development after 1895, when Joseph Chamberlain became Secretary of State for the Colonies. Thanks to his more liberal financial policy, Cyprus received some metropolitan loans for the development of its infrastructure, such as harbours and railways.²³ Cash flows on the island only saw a significant increase during the years of the First World War, due to the need to supply British forces in the region and the growing external demand for agricultural products.

Under this strict financial policy, the administration of education was left to the local communities. Schools were largely dependent on fees from students and private donations, as government aid was scarce, though directed to schools of both communities. This constituted a significant change of policy, as under the Ottoman administration, only Muslim schools received financial support from the government, while Greek Christian schools were exclusively dependent on communal contributions, coming mainly from the Church. Under the British, Orthodox and Muslim schools continued to follow teaching curricula modelled respectively on the Greek and the Ottoman educational systems.

Both communities had their separate town and village school committees, district committees and boards of education, which covered all administrative affairs, such as the appointment, dismissal, payment and promotion of teachers; the establishment and maintenance of schools; and the drafting of teaching curricula.²⁴ Village and town school committees were elected annually by the taxpaying male population of each village or town. At the next level, the Christian district committee consisted of the British District Commissioner, the bishop of the district, and four more members, again elected by the taxpaying male inhabitants of the district. The Muslim district committee was composed of the British District Commissioner, the Sharia Judge of the district and four elected members. Finally, every two years the district committees elected six members (one from each district) for each of the two boards of education. In addition to these elected representatives, the Christian board of education consisted of the British Chief Secretary, the Archbishop, and three Greek-Cypriot members of the Legislative Council;

²³ Rappas, 2008, p. 33.

²⁴ Heraclidou, 2011, p. 15.

similarly, the Muslim board of education consisted, in addition to its own district-elected members, of the Chief Secretary, the Chief Cadi, the Mufti, and a representative of the Evkaf.

Throughout the period of British rule, the structure and administration of education underwent several changes, but always remained inextricably linked to the financial policy of the colonial government and the politics of both communities. Most importantly, the British wanted to avoid any action that would provoke opposition from the local population. Under this axiom, the government was initially willing to maintain to a certain extent the privileges of the confessional elites of both communities and accept their control over education. In the following decades, however, as Greek-Cypriot schools became a focal point for nationalist mobilization on the island, the British attempted to de-nationalize education. One of the first such moves, which took place at the end of the nineteenth century, was to attach to the Pan-Cypriot Gymnasium the extra role of training elementary school teachers, who were hitherto trained mainly in Greece.²⁵

1.2 The Local Elites in the Face of British Rule

The withdrawal of the Ottoman authorities and the incorporation of Cyprus in the British Empire forced the traditional Christian and Muslim religious elites to find ways to adapt to the new, secular political and administrative context so as to maintain their political power.²⁶ Under the Ottoman administration, the head of the autocephalous Orthodox Church – the Archbishop – was recognized as not only the spiritual but also the political leader of his congregation. Similarly, the cadi (judge) and the mufti (interpreter of the Sharia Law) were recognized as the de facto leaders and representatives of the Muslims of the island. By contrast, the political privileges that the Ottomans had granted to the Christian and Muslim higher clergy were not recognized under British rule. All Cypriot subjects of the new administration became equal, irrespective of rank, religion, or position at a religious hierarchy. Equality before the English Statute Law meant that the clergy would be taxed equally to the lay members of their congregation, and that the judicial

²⁵ Heraclidou, 2011, p. 17.

²⁶ For a study of the Church's role as an institution of political power from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century, see Michail Michail, 'Η διαδικασία συγκρότησης ενός θεσμού εξουσίας: Εκκλησία της Κύπρου 1754-1910 [The process of formation of a power institution: Church of Cyprus 1754-1910]', (University of Cyprus D.Phil Thesis, 2004). For an overview of the politics of the Church throughout colonial rule, see Sia Anagnostopoulou, 'Η Εκκλησία της Κύπρου και ο εθναρχικός της ρόλος: 1878-1960 [The Church of Cyprus and its ethnarchic role: 1878-1960]', *Sighrona Themata* 68-69-70 (1998-1999), 198-227.

system would treat a priest or imam the same as an ordinary villager. In a particularly scandalous incident in 1879, two priests were arrested for a minor offence and had their beards shaved while in custody – for sanitary purposes, according to prison policy.²⁷ Letters of support to the priests and of protest to the government were published in the Greek-Cypriot press, while the incident was discussed in the House of Lords. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Lord Salisbury was forced to admit that there was no justification for the incident and that steps had been taken to prevent anything similar happening in the future.²⁸ Nevertheless, a few months later, Salisbury stressed to the High Commissioner that it should be made clear to the clergy that any demands to be exempted from the ordinary process of Civil and Criminal Law would be rejected.²⁹

Although the British did not radically reform either the fiscal or the land-ownership systems, they did encourage a shift towards the liberation of peasants from big land-owners, most notably the Church and the Evkaf. As the Ottoman land regime was undermined during the early years of British rule, lands owned by the Church and Evkaf were being claimed by a mass of poor peasants, whose rights of usufruct gradually evolved into rights of full ownership.³⁰ Most significantly, the new administration made taxes directly payable to the state and abolished the tithe for a large number of products, while the tax-farmers of the Ottoman period were required to pay in full the revenue that had been collected and owned to the state.³¹ In the new legal framework, ecclesiastical property became subject to state laws and the obligatory levies of the Christians to the prelates were abolished, reducing the available revenues of the Church.³² As the Church's control over the Orthodox population was principally based on the dependence of this population on the prelates, the reforms threatened its authority at the social level. Indeed, soon after the arrival of the British, peasants began refusing to pay their yearly dues to the Orthodox Church, indicating the undermining of religious authority in the popular imagination. As early as 1880, Archbishop Sophronios complained to the High Commissioner that Church's finances

²⁷ Gail Hook, *Protectorate Cyprus: British Imperial Power before WWI* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 130.

²⁸ *Hansard, House of Lord Debates*, 247 (17 June 1879), cc. 19-22.

²⁹ Hook, 2012, p. 131.

³⁰ Rolandos Katsiaounis, 'Labour, Society and Politics in Cyprus during the second half of the nineteenth century' (King's College London D.Phil Thesis, 1996), 220.

³¹ *The Cyprus Gazette*, 2 April 1881, Ordinance No. V, 'To Facilitate the Collection of Tithes', pp. 82-83; Katsiaounis, 1996, pp. 122-123.

³² Michail, 2004, pp. 235-236.

would fall into ruin unless police assisted them to collect tithes, in the name of their *ab antiquo* privileges that had been codified by Ottoman decree.³³

In the case of the Muslim religious elite, the loss of its direct links with the Ottoman Government led to an even greater loss of power, even though Cyprus nominally remained an Ottoman province until 1914. As the new administrative system degraded the Muslim community from the *Millet-i Hakime* (the supreme community) to a religious community with a limited political role, the Muslim religious authorities faced a more severe crisis of authority than their Orthodox counterparts. Notably, the principle of proportionality became intensely criticized as soon as it was introduced by the British in the early 1880s. According to the Muslim elite, proportional representation in the Legislative Council was fundamentally unjust and favoured the Greek Orthodox community.³⁴ The Muslims counter-proposed the adoption of equal representation, that is, the composition of the island's councils and the public service by an equal number of Muslim and Christian members.

The undermining of the religious authorities' established position also led to common initiatives undertaken by both Christian and Muslim religious officials in the defence of their interests. As mentioned, the British administration did not abolish the Ottoman district councils and the Central Administrative Council. The responsibilities of these councils, however, were greatly reduced, while the majority of the Central Council's responsibilities – legislative, executive and judicial – were instead transferred to the Legislative and Executive Councils. In 1881, the Christian and Muslim members of the Central Council protested the absence of formal jurisdiction, while three years later the Bishop of Kition asked for the reinstitution of the district councils' responsibilities, stressing that both the Mufti and the bishops, being the spiritual heads of the island's communities, should be permanent members.³⁵

The main institution through which the Orthodox Church would attempt to secure its traditional power was the Legislative Council itself. The division between the Muslim and the Christian communities, which had become institutionalized and politicized in the selection of

³³ Bryant, 2004, p. 16.

³⁴ Philios Zannetos, *Ιστορία της Νήσου Κύπρου από της αγγλικής κατοχής μέχρι σήμερα* [History of the island of Cyprus from British occupation until today] (Larnaca: Typois "Filokalias", 1911), 318, 320, memorandum by the Muslim authorities, April 1882.

³⁵ *The Cyprus Gazette*, 15 March 1884, draft of law proposed by the Bishop of Kition 'For the reinstitution of the Administrative Councils', p. 397.

council members, was key to the Church's attempt to claim authority over the Greek-Cypriot community within the new political context. Because the colonial state refused to safeguard its political and economic authority, the Church was forced to rethink its relationship with its congregation. The formalization of dividing the population into ethno-religious groups facilitated the prelates in emerging as the de facto leadership of the Greek-Cypriot community. The Church was the only well-organized local institution of the Ottoman period, and the Christian (and Muslim) clergy had a traditional dominant presence in politics. At the same time, despite British innovations, the Greek-Cypriot population remained economically dependent on the Church, which retained its status as the biggest landowner on the island. Considering the impact that religion had on people's everyday life,³⁶ as well as the fact that the poll was not secret until 1906,³⁷ it is no surprise that the prelates were easily elected to the Christian seats of the Legislative Council from the very first elections.³⁸

Most importantly, the Church developed a nationalist discourse, appropriating the main political discourse of the bourgeoisie of the late nineteenth century. Throughout colonial rule, the Church strove to emerge as the national authority of the Greek-Cypriot community, and came increasingly to regard the union of Cyprus with Greece as its main aspiration. In fact, the survival of the Church came to be intrinsically connected to that of a Hellenic identity on the island, reminiscent of the role of the Catholic faith in the revival of a Gaelic identity in nineteenth-century Ireland.³⁹

Similarly to Christian prelates, members of the *ulema* (Muslim religious scholars and notables) were also elected to the Legislative Council. Moreover, the official legal status of Cyprus as an Ottoman territory until 1914 secured a second role for the Muslim religious elite. The 1878 Cyprus Convention provided not only that the Muslim community would partially

³⁶ During the Ottoman period, the Church was the main authority regulating local rivalries, the production and distribution of commodities and the artistic and cultural expression of the Christian population. Michail, 2004, p. 283.

³⁷ The secret ballot was introduced for the 1906 elections for the Legislative Council. See *The Cyprus Gazette*, 18 August 1906, 'Proclamation by the High Commissioner', pp. 5965-5968.

³⁸ At the first elections, held in 1883, the Bishop of Kition, Kyprianos, even managed to get elected in two (out of three total) electoral districts. The Cyprus State Archive [hereafter CSA], SA1/6339/1883, Bishop of Kition to the Limassol District Commissioner 16 June 1883. For an analysis of the elections during British rule, see Vassilis Protopapas, *Εκλογική Ιστορία της Κύπρου: Πολιτευτές, κόμματα και εκλογές στην Αγγλοκρατία: 1878-1960* [*Electoral History of Cyprus: Politicians, Parties and Elections during British Rule; 1878-1960*] (Athens: Themelio, 2012).

³⁹ Robert Holland, *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus 1954-1959* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1998), 6.

retain its privileged access to positions in the administration, but also that the economic and institutional role of the Evkaf would represent a further means of intervention for the Ottoman Government. According to the Annex of the 1878 Convention, the Sharia Courts would continue to exist and would assume sole jurisdiction over religious matters concerning the Muslim population of the island. Furthermore, the administration of the Evkaf was vested in one delegate appointed by the Ottoman Government and one appointed by the British.

Thus, while the political and administrative power of the Muslim religious authorities was reduced, their role was at the same time institutionally recognized by the British. This was the key for them to claim their power over the Muslim population of the island. This objective was equally necessary for the British, as long as the Turkish-Cypriot traditional elite remained under their control. This alignment of interests is observable already from the beginning of British rule on the island and more evident from the early twentieth century onward. Overall, the broad adoption of the Ottoman administrative system by the British and the institutionalization of communalism allowed for the maintenance of the religious elites' power and allowed for the preservation of the existing social equilibrium, both between the general population and the elites, as well as between Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots.

1.3 The Advance of Greek-Cypriot Nationalism

The secularization of political power encouraged certain laymen within the communal administration to challenge the absolute supremacy of the Church. In particular, they raised the question of the management of the Church's revenue, contributing to the intensification of conflict within the Church between a faction that recognized the Church' obligation to concede political power to the laymen and another that insisted on maintaining the traditional hegemony of the clergy.⁴⁰ The conflict did not occur between a secular-minded laity and the clergy, but within the Church itself. The clergy became increasingly divided between the older, more conciliatory prelates and a new, intransigent faction that strongly advocated for enosis. The first group owed its leading role to the traditional, confessional organization of society, and did not

⁴⁰ Zannetos, *Ιστορία της Νήσου Κύπρου*, vol. 2, 375-6; Michail, 'The process of formation of a power institution', 246.

oppose the incorporation of Cyprus into the British Empire. The second group supported the annexation of the island into the Greek nation-state, and argued that Greek-Cypriot deputies in the Legislative Council should press forward such a demand. This faction was significantly reinforced during the first decade of the twentieth century, when Athens-educated Cypriots, both laymen and clerics, began to return to the island and gradually formed a new generation of politicians and community leaders.⁴¹ This new nationalist intelligentsia was particularly active in the field of education. Literate villagers and priests who had been undertaking teaching roles were eventually displaced by graduates of the University of Athens and secondary schools on the island. Notably, between 1898 and 1936, all schoolmasters of the Pan-Cypriot Gymnasium came from Greece, while teachers educated in Greece constituted about a third of the total teaching staff on the island. In addition, the Greek Ministry of Education determined the curriculum and books to be used by the island's schools.⁴² Despite its ardent nationalist ideology and its initial anti-clerical policy, this faction, being unable to overturn the confessional organization of society, attempted rather to promote its nationalist politics *through* the Church. The conflict was thus expressed within the Church, whose discourse became more politicized and militant.

As the political claims of the new, intransigent faction became popular within the Church, the conflict against the older, conciliatory elements was restricted to that institution. In this context, the participation of the prelates in the elections was a major factor in the politicization of their discourse. At the same time, due to the rivalry with the laymen, they appropriated part of the latter's discourse and thus articulated a more militant political agenda. Moreover, the lay element participated in the elections for ecclesiastical offices, thus forcing the clerical candidates to adopt parts of the lay agenda and to build alliances with members of the lay elites.⁴³ By the turn of the twentieth century, the pursuit of enosis had become a significant component of the political discourse of the Greek-Cypriot elites. In particular, the old, conciliatory elements adopted the claim of enosis and came to see the Church as the unique national authority of the Greek-Cypriots, which should maintain good relations with the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul. The new, intransigent party, despite its initial opposition to

⁴¹ Panayiotis Persianis, 'The British Colonial Education "Lending" Policy in Cyprus (1878-1960)', *Comparative Education*, 32 (1996), 53.

⁴² Heraclidou, 2011, pp. 20-21.

⁴³ See Charter of the Church of Cyprus, articles 17-31. *Καταστατικόν της Αγιοτάτης Εκκλησίας της Κύπρου* [*Charter of the Most Holy Church of Cyprus*] (Nicosia: 1914).

the participation of the prelates in the elections for the Legislative Council, as well as its position in favour of the participation of laymen in the management of Church revenues, cooperated with the Bishop of Kition after his election at the Council in 1883, and gradually recognized the Church as a national authority.⁴⁴

The conflict between the modernist and the traditionalist factions, which rallied behind the Bishops of Kition and Kyrenia, respectively, peaked around 1900 when the Archiepiscopal See fell vacant after the death of Archbishop Sophronios.⁴⁵ The archiepiscopal question evolved into a multi-level conflict that brought the nationalist bourgeoisie of Larnaca against the conservative traditional landowning elite of Nicosia.⁴⁶ For the faction that supported the Bishopric of Kition in the election, the main criterion of patriotism was loyalty to the Greek nation and the Greek nation state. As for their opponents, represented by the Archbishopric, the Bishopric of Kyrenia and the monasteries, they viewed patriotism as loyalty to the religious faith and belief in the primacy of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The archiepiscopal question culminated therefore in a confrontation between a nationalist party that recognized the Greek state as the national centre of Hellenism and a traditionalist party that placed the national centre in the Ecumenical Patriarchate and was willing to collaborate with the colonial state, while claiming a modern representative system of government. Furthermore, the confrontation between these two factions soon expanded into issues that concerned the functioning of Church administration. The intransigent nationalists repeatedly called for transparent and democratic management of the Church's property and revenue by incorporating the participation of the laity. The issue was resolved in 1910, after the intervention of the colonial government and the Patriarchate of Alexandria. The new, intransigent faction prevailed, and the Church gradually adopted a set of

⁴⁴ Anagnostopoulou, 1998-1999, p. 203.

⁴⁵ Cyril the Bishop of Kition was born in the village of Prodomos, in Limassol, in 1845. Between 1866 and 1872, he studied at the Theological School of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem. After his return in Cyprus, he became a deacon and preacher at the Archbishopric, and he taught at the Greek school of Nicosia. In 1889, he was elected Bishop of Kyrenia and four years later Bishop of Kition. He was subsequently elected as a member of the Legislative Council from 1889 to 1911, and in 1909 he was elected as Archbishop Cyril II. The Bishop of Kyrenia, also named Cyril, was born in the village of Prastio, in the district of Famagusta, in 1859. From 1882 to 1889, he studied philology and theology at the University of Athens. In 1890, he was appointed teacher in Limassol, and, in 1895, he was elected Bishop of Kyrenia. In 1916, he succeeded Cyril II in the Archiepiscopal See as Cyril III.

⁴⁶ For a detailed analysis of the archiepiscopal question, see Michail Michail, 'Το Αρχιεπισκοπικό Ζήτημα (1900-1909), Το Ιδεολογικό Του Περιεχόμενο Και η Ανάδειξη της Εκκλησίας της Κύπρου ως Εθνικής Αρχής στο Βρετανικό Πλαίσιο Διοίκησης [The Archiepiscopal Question (1900-1909), Its Ideological Content and the Emergence of the Church of Cyprus as National Authority in the British Administration Framework]', *Journal of the Cyprus Research Centre*, XXXI (2005), 307-360.

nationalist policies. From that year onwards, the demand for enosis was constantly put forward by the Church. These nationalist politics and discourse, however, would not become explicitly anti-British and anti-colonial until the second half of the 1920s.

Until at least the end of the First World War, Greek-Cypriot nationalists only timidly put forth their claims; the enosis movement remained largely incidental until the mid-1920s. As a rule, Greek-Cypriot political leaders submitted petitions and memoranda and despatched telegrams to the local and metropolitan British authorities. They also sent delegations, often headed by the Archbishop, to London to promote the cause of enosis, appealing to British generosity. The policy of petitions, despite the slightly more militant character it acquired in periods of economic hardship, such as in 1887, or during Greek-Turkish crises, such as in 1897-98 and 1912-13, had a negligible impact on the Colonial Office. In most cases, the British reminded the Greek-Cypriots that the island remained an Ottoman territory, and that Britain therefore had no right to cede Cyprus to any other state, as this would constitute a violation of the 1878 Cyprus Convention. After Britain annexed the island in November 1914, the British stressed the need to protect the interests of the Turkish-Cypriot community, an argument that would be reemployed in the 1950s. Overall, the British Government did not contest the nationalist claims of the Greek-Cypriots until the 1920s, a policy that reached its apogee in October 1915, when Britain offered Cyprus to Greece.

As a Colonial Office official stated in June 1895, the calls for enosis should be ignored, given that there was no attempt to translate them into action or to breach the peace in the colony in any way.⁴⁷ In the same spirit, when High Commissioner Smith suggested that enosis agitation be made illegal, the Colonial Office responded by appointing the more tolerant King-Harman as his successor. In December 1904, a few weeks after assuming office, the new High Commissioner observed that the enosis calls were the natural consequence of the Greek-Cypriots' national instincts and could not be considered hostile propaganda against the British administration.⁴⁸ An even more sympathetic approach was employed by the Under-Secretary of State, Winston Churchill, who, upon his visit to Cyprus in 1907, stated:

⁴⁷ Georghallides, 1979, p. 84.

⁴⁸ Georghallides, 1979, p. 85.

I think it only natural that the Cypriot people, who are of Greek descent, should regards their incorporation with what may be called their mother-country as an ideal to be earnestly, devoutly, and fervently cherished.⁴⁹

British attitudes would, however, change after the end of the First World War, and especially after Cyprus became officially a Crown Colony in 1925. As the Assistant Under-Secretary noted, referring to a protest by Archbishop Cyril against the constitutional changes brought about with the transformation of the island into a Crown Colony,

[N]ow that Cyprus is definitely a British colony it seems to me that this rubbish about an enslaved people with national aspirations for transfer to Greece is very near sedition.⁵⁰

In the following period, the colonial state would constantly intervene in both Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot communal affairs, as will be discussed in following chapters.

The appeal of nationalism among Greek-Cypriots, as well as their opposition to British rule, gradually intensified after the end of the war. The first move of the Greek-Cypriot leadership that was openly hostile to the colonial regime can actually be traced to the early 1910s. Soon after the resolution of the archiepiscopal question, the outbreak of war between the Ottoman Empire and Italy in September 1911 placed the maintenance of the status quo in the Eastern Mediterranean into peril, and forced the intransigent faction to adopt a more militant stance. In April 1912, all the Greek-Cypriot members of the Legislative Council resigned, demanding more political liberties, the abolition of the Tribute and enosis.⁵¹ The crisis provoked by the resignations had a severe impact on communal relations, causing the most extensive disturbances on the island since 1878. Outbreaks of violence that occurred in several places at the same time resulted in five fatalities, while 17 persons were seriously injured. The Commission of Inquiry that was formed afterwards, composed by a British, a Turkish-Cypriot and a Greek-Cypriot, was unable to agree as to responsibility, though concern was expressed about the reliability of the police, mainly composed of Turkish-Cypriots, in controlling riots.⁵²

⁴⁹ Georgios Georghallides, 'Churchill's 1907 visit to Cyprus: a political analysis', *Journal of the Cyprus Research Centre*, III (1969-1970), 211.

⁵⁰ NA, CO 67/215, *Despatches; Offices and Individuals*, Assistant Under-Secretary's minutes, 15 July /1925.

⁵¹ NA, CO 67/166, *Despatches*, High Commissioner Sir Hamilton Goold-Adams to Secretary of State Lewis Vernon Harcourt, 18 April 1912.

⁵² In 1912, there were 464 Turkish-Cypriot and 276 Greek-Cypriot policemen. Holland and Markides, 2008, pp. 174-176.

The outbreak of the First World War and the entry of the Ottoman Empire into the war against Britain in November 1914 made the British authorities fear a possible threat on the island. Nevertheless, the Turkish-Cypriot elite assured the government early on of its loyalty to Britain, while the Greek-Cypriot leadership avoided a militant stance such as the one taken in 1912. In fact, the biggest political split on the island was within the Greek-Cypriot community itself, which, especially after 1916, was increasingly divided between *Venizelist* and royalist camps, echoing the respective and much more acute polarization in Greece.⁵³

Following the end of the war, a Greek-Cypriot delegation, headed by the Archbishop, proceeded to London in January 1919 to submit a petition for enosis to the government and the parliament.⁵⁴ Despite the international post-war rhetoric on the right to self-determination and some initial encouragement by the Prime Minister Lloyd George, the delegation eventually proved unsuccessful. This initiative, however, constituted a turning point in the Greek-Cypriot leadership. Two years later, the Political Organization of Cyprus was created, presided over by the Archbishop and headed by a National Council. The purpose of the organization was to promote effectively the nationalist claims of the Greek-Cypriot leadership.⁵⁵ In 1922, the Greek-Cypriot elites, divided between those demanding immediate enosis and those who considered self-government as an intermediate stage, decided to boycott the elections for the Legislative Council, in protest against the government's intransigence on enosis.⁵⁶ Although the boycott movement failed, as seven Greek-Cypriots ran for the elections and were elected, the initiative made the intentions of the National Council clear. In the following years, enosisist actions increased, as will be discussed in the next chapter, deepening the politicization of the Greek-Cypriot community.

In the same period, following the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, a political trend of Kemalist nationalism and modernism was becoming ever more apparent within the Turkish-Cypriot community, posing a serious threat to the traditionalist pro-government Turkish-Cypriot elite. This trend was particularly evident in the Turkish-Cypriot press, but also

⁵³ The *Venizelists* in Greece were the advocates of the politics of Eleftherios Venizelos, Prime Minister for a large part of the period between 1910 and 1933. Holland and Markides, 2008, p. 179.

⁵⁴ François Crouzet, *Η κυπριακή διένεξη: 1946-1959* [*The Cyprus conflict; 1946-1959*], vol. 1 (Athens, 2011), 110.

⁵⁵ Sir George Hill, *A History of Cyprus: The Ottoman Province, the British Colony, 1571-1948*, vol. 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 536.

⁵⁶ Georghallides, 1979, pp. 230-232.

in official bodies, most significantly the Legislative Council. After a long period of almost absolute loyalty to the British, the cooperation of the Turkish-Cypriot leadership with the government could no longer be taken for granted. Most importantly, cooperation among the Turkish-Cypriot members of the Legislative Council with their Greek-Cypriot counterparts against the colonial government was becoming increasingly frequent at the end of the 1920s, and especially after the prevalence of the modernists in the 1930 elections, peaking before the 1931 revolt. Furthermore, the second half of the 1920s witnessed the emergence of a new political force that rejected nationalist politics and claimed to represent the interests of the lower classes of the island. The Communist Party of Cyprus, officially founded in 1926, became particularly active in the formation of trade unions and the mobilization of the Cypriot working class.

These political developments and the rising social discontent in the late 1920s and early 1930s, owing mainly to the economic hardship of the population, led to one of the most significant political crises in the island's history. The 1931 October revolt would come as a surprise to both the colonial authorities and the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot political forces, given the fragmentation of Cyprus' political landscape and the relative calmness existing on the island in the previous decade – compared to the much more acute unrest happening around the Eastern Mediterranean in the same period.

In April 1931, the Legislative Council rejected the proposed Customs, Excise and Revenue Bill, thanks to the shared opposition of Turkish- and Greek-Cypriot deputies.⁵⁷ In September of the same year, the government passed the Law through an Order in Council.⁵⁸ In the following days, the outcry raised in the Greek-Cypriot community forced the Greek-Cypriot deputies to oppose government policy more vigorously. On 17 October, the Bishop of Kition, a member of the Legislative Council and a moderate nationalist among the Greek-Cypriot community, resigned from the body. He subsequently proclaimed enosis, declared civil disobedience and called the Greek-Cypriots to give everything for the realization of union, even their lives. On 21 October, their hand forced by the bishop's move, all Greek-Cypriot Council

⁵⁷ Georgios Georghallides, *Cyprus and the governorship of Sir Ronald Storrs: The causes of the 1931 crisis* (Nicosia, Cyprus Research Centre, 1985), 570-574.

⁵⁸ *The Cyprus Gazette*, 9 September 1931, pp. 781-788.

members resigned and proceeded to the Nicosia Commercial Club to address the gathered crowd.⁵⁹

After the councillors finished their speeches, some 5000 Greek-Cypriots marched towards the Government House, carrying sticks, torches, banners and Greek flags. Shouting slogans in favour of enosis and the end of British rule, they eventually set the building on fire.⁶⁰ Soon afterwards, riots broke out across the island, in both urban and rural areas. On the following day, summoned by church bells, a crowd in Limassol armed with sticks and tins of petrol set the District Commissioner's house on fire. On 24 October, 300 persons led by the Bishop of Kyrenia raided government offices in the town and replaced the British flag with a Greek one. On the same day, supporters of the Communist Party attacked the Famagusta police station. Violence spread to the rural areas, with instances including stone-throwing at British troops, the burning of customs buildings and government offices, the destruction of forest stations and plantations, raids on police stations, lootings of salt stores (the product being a government monopoly), the despoiling of a ration lorry and the robbing of a tax collector. In total, there were instances of violence reported in every major town in Cyprus as well as 209 of the island's 598 Greek-Cypriot or mixed villages.

The revolt was quite easily suppressed by the British within a week. Upon the Governor's request, the British Mediterranean fleet despatched two cruisers and two destroyers carrying platoons of royal marines to supplement the small contingent of Royal Welsh Fusiliers posted in Cyprus. Additional units were transported by air from Egypt. The local police set up and armed a voluntary force of a further 40 men, mostly British officials residing on the island. Within a few days, many Greek-Cypriot politicians and communists were arrested and law and order was restored throughout the island. In total, seven Greek-Cypriot civilians were killed during the revolt, 68 persons were wounded (29 civilians and 39 soldiers and policemen), 400 were arrested, ten were deported for life (mainly elite politicians and clergymen), and 3359 were

⁵⁹ Georghallides, 1985, pp. 679 and 686-695.

⁶⁰ Unless otherwise stated, the sources for the reconstitution of the uprising are documents included in the following files and works: NA, CO 67/240/11, *Serious unrest and anti-government disturbances*; NA, CO 67/240/13, *Riots in Cyprus: political events leading up to the disturbances*; NA, CO 67/243/1, *Report on the disturbances of October 1931*; NA, CO 67/243/2, *Report on the disturbances of October 1931*; Petros Stylianou, 'Το κίνημα του Οκτώβρη του 1931 στην Κύπρο [The October 1931 movement in Cyprus]' (University of Ioannina D.Phil. Thesis, 1984), 59-151; Rappas, 2008, pp. 18-20; Holland, 1998, pp. 1-5; Grekos, *Τα Οκτωβριανά και το Κ.Κ.Κ. [The October events and K.K.K.]* (Nicosia: 1994), 11-15.

brought to court, leading to 2606 convictions for penalties ranging from simple fines to prison sentences of up to five years. Although the revolt had been an exclusively Greek-Cypriot affair, a Reparation Impost Law levied indiscriminately fines on towns and villages considered as collectively responsible for seditious actions, for a total amount of £34,315.

Immediately after the suppression of the revolt, the colonial authorities imposed an authoritarian regime on the colony, resembling in part the British administrative policy in Malta during the 1920s and 1930s.⁶¹ First to be abolished was the Legislative Council, while the Governor was vested with full powers. The Executive Council was maintained, its membership reformed to consist of the Governor, four official members – the Colonial Secretary, the Commissioner of Nicosia, the Attorney General and the Treasurer – and three non-official members, nominated by the Governor. In the following period, a series of laws were passed, which, among others, abolished all electoral procedures and representative institutions, imposed censorship on the press, forbade assemblies of more than five persons, outlawed the Communist Party and generally suppressed all political activity on the island.⁶² In 1933, an Advisory Council was established in place of the Legislative Council. All of its members, like the district and municipal councils, were appointed by the Governor. The authoritarian regime would be partially lifted only during the years of World War II.

Conclusion

Cyprus was occupied by Britain in 1878 to secure the empire's interests in the sea route to India, but the strategic importance of the island decreased significantly four years later, when the British occupied Egypt. Given the island's limited value until the end of the First World War, the British authorities did not interfere much with local political activity, as long as public order was not disturbed. Even the enosis claims of the Greek-Cypriot elite were tolerated by the British, as long as it was phrased as an aspiration for the future. At the same time, the adoption of Ottoman administrative structures allowed for the maintenance of the authority of the traditional confessional elites. Conversely, the secularization of the political power, the introduction of

⁶¹ See Henry Frendo, *Party politics in a fortress colony; the Maltese experience* (Valletta: Midsea Books, 1979).

⁶² *The Cyprus Gazette*, 1932, 'A Law to Amend the Newspaper, Book and Printing Presses Law'; 'A Law to Regulate the Holding of Assemblies, Meetings and Processions', pp. 380-381 and 743-745.

representative institutions and the expansion of the press facilitated the emergence of new political actors, initially within the Greek-Cypriot community. The end of the war brought about a significant increase in the island's strategic importance. The British authorities started to interfere actively in Turkish- and Greek-Cypriot communal affairs, especially after the island was officially declared a Crown Colony. In the same period, Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot leaders would promote nationalist policies, as will be analysed in chapters 2 and 3. The confrontation between the government and part of the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot leaderships over the control of communal affairs gathered speed and culminated in late 1931. In October, with a background of acute economic hardship and growing popular discontent, a Greek-Cypriot revolt broke out throughout the island, bringing to the fore a variety of grievances, all under the slogan of enosis.

The October revolt, which constituted 'the most humiliating blow sustained by the British in any of their Crown Colonies' during the interwar period, was followed by the imposition of authoritarian rule on the island.⁶³ Many of the repressive measures were eventually lifted during the early 1940s, yet the suspension of constitutional government in Cyprus was, uniquely in British colonial policy, never reversed before the end of colonial rule. Granting a semi-liberal constitution to the colony would only briefly be considered by the British after the end of the Second World War. Despite the initially positive reaction from the Turkish-Cypriot leadership and the Left, the initiative did not materialize, mainly due to the intransigence of the Greek-Cypriot nationalist leadership. As will be analysed in the following chapters, despite the government's attempts to suppress political activity on the island, Cypriot society was pervasively politicized during the 1930s and 1940s, demonstrating the failure of the British to make Cyprus 'a real colony'.

⁶³ Holland, 1998, pp. 4-5.

Chapter 2: Confessional vs. Secular Politics and the Consolidation of Greek-Cypriot Nationalism

This chapter explores the development of Greek-Cypriot politics from the second half of the 1920s until the end of the 1940s, focusing on the gradual consolidation of nationalism within the community and examining closely two principal points of contention, both involving the Orthodox Church. Following the 1931 revolt, the colonial authorities sought to repress the political activities of the Church, the main advocate of enosis, and counter the appeal of nationalism among the Greek-Cypriot population. At the same time, the politics of the nationalist elites, among which the Church was the most powerful, was directly challenged by the secular political space of the Left. Nevertheless, nationalist politics gradually prevailed within the community by both confrontations reinforcing the Church. On the one hand, the Church managed to enhance its political authority, claiming to represent the national interests of the Greek-Cypriot population against the colonial government. On the other hand, the main party of the Left, AKEL, was eventually forced to fully adopt the enosis discourse and recognize the Church as the national leadership of the community. In 1950, the Left would support the Church in organizing a plebiscite on enosis, which resulted in an overwhelming vote in favour of the union of Cyprus with Greece.

As this chapter focuses on the consolidation of nationalism within the Greek-Cypriot community, the politics of the Communist Party and AKEL are here examined mostly in their relation to the nationalist politics of the Greek-Cypriot elites. The role of the parties of the Left and the labour movement in the politicization of Cypriot society as a whole and their confrontation with the government are explored in chapter 4.

2.1 Political Dynamics and the 1931 Crisis

During the 1920s and the early 1930s, significant developments within and outside Cyprus led to the gradual redefinition of Cypriot politics. Within a context of economic recession, the emergence of new dynamics in the Cypriot political landscape reshaped intra-communal and

inter-communal politics, and created the grounds for the expression of anti-colonial politics. By 1931, the existing political order had become intensely destabilized, and the consensual administration of the colony had become unmanageable for the British. At the end of the year, the outbreak of the October revolt crystallized the political dynamics of the previous period, thus constituting a turning point in the evolution of Greek-Cypriot politics and the relations between that community and the colonial authorities.

The Politics of the Elites

Following the end of the First World War, and especially after May 1925, when Cyprus was officially declared a Crown Colony, the British began to intervene more actively in Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot communal affairs. In the case of the Greek-Cypriot community, this became particularly evident in the domain of education. In 1923, a law on Christian educational affairs included provisions stipulating that teachers would be appointed directly by the Governor, on the recommendation of the Christian board of education.¹ The law was amended further in 1929, so as to severely limit the autonomy of communal education. According to the amended law, the three Christian members of the Legislative Council lost their ex-officio positions on the board, and the six remaining members, which had been previously elected by the district committees, would then be appointed by the Governor himself. The board would be furthermore deprived of the ability to appoint, transfer, promote or dismiss elementary school teachers, who would be placed under the direct supervision of the Department of Education, which from then on would be responsible for all educational affairs.² Government intervention in the communal privileges of the community, both in education and other domains that had been autonomously managed – especially the appointment of village authorities – caused part of the Greek-Cypriot elites and the press to promote nationalist politics and demand for enosis more intensely, in response to British attempts to ‘de-Hellenize’ Greek-Cypriot youth.

At the same time, another segment of the elites chose to adopt a more moderate stance on enosis politics. Their position was reinforced by significant political developments outside the

¹ *The Cyprus Gazette*, Law no. 22 of 1923, pp. 315-316.

² *The Cyprus Gazette*, Laws nos. 4 and 5 of 1929, pp. 805-826 and 909-910.

island during the second half of the 1920s. The outcome of the 1919-22 Greco-Turkish war, marked by the Asia Minor Disaster and the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne in July 1923, put a tragic end to Greek irredentism (the *Megali Idea*) as a coherent national project. These events challenged the realism of enosis and put the intransigent nationalist discourse temporarily into question. In this context, following 1922, one can observe the emergence of two rival groups: the intransigent and moderate unionists. Both groups regarded the union of Cyprus with Greece as their goal, but each promoted a different set of policies. The first group considered enosis to be an absolute, immediate goal. They pushed for non-cooperation with the British authorities, and advocated for the refusal to pay taxes and the resignation of the Greek-Cypriot deputies from the Legislative Council. The second group placed enosis within a more pragmatic political approach, which aimed at social and economic reforms for the improvement of living conditions and the expansion of communal autonomy. This group began to argue explicitly for autonomy or self-government within the British Empire, along the lines of a deal recently achieved by Malta.³

Just as the conflict between a conciliatory and an intransigent camp at the beginning of the century ended with the resolution of the archiepiscopal question in 1910, the rivalry between the moderates and the intransigents was again debated within the Church. The moderate unionists rallied around Nicodemos, the Bishop of Kition, while the intransigent unionists rallied around Makarios, the Bishop of Kyrenia, and the Abbot of the Kykko Monastery. Archbishop Cyril (1916-1933) did not interfere much in politics, despite his tacit support of the intransigents' camp. Cyril had generally cultivated good relations with the British and at least until the mid-1920s urged the Greek-Cypriot population to act as loyal subjects and cooperate fully with the government.⁴ In October 1925, the confrontation between the two camps spilled into the elections for the Legislative Council. The election results demonstrated the clear prevalence of the moderates, to the satisfaction of the government. The British could expect that the new deputies would cooperate with the colonial government, and promote the claim of self-government rather than enosis.⁵ Nevertheless, Britain did not formulate an offer that would enhance the position of the moderate camp (such an offer would have to wait until the mid-1940s), thus contributing to the gradual dominance of the intransigent nationalists. In the

³ Holland and Markides, 2008, p. 183.

⁴ NA, CO 67/285/12, *The Archiepiscopal question 1938*, memorandum by John Douglas, General Secretary of the Church of England Council on Foreign Relations, 1938.

⁵ NA, CO 67/215, Governor Sir Malcolm Stevenson to Secretary of State Leo Amery, 16 November 1925.

following elections that took place in 1930, the success of the intransigents signalled the beginning of a period of strong confrontation between the two camps, and between the Greek-Cypriot political leadership and the government over the control of communal affairs.

The main principles of the moderate unionists group were codified in two articles by the Bishop of Kition, published in the newspaper *Nea Isotis* (*New Equality*) under the title 'Mea Culpa' on 3 and 10 October 1931. The Bishop's main preoccupation was to defend the moderate push for reforms by cooperating with the British.⁶ In January 1930, the intransigent unionists had formed the National Organization of Cyprus to advance their position within the Greek-Cypriot community. The Bishop of Kyrenia toured the countryside, visiting numerous villages and delivering speeches, usually after Church services, that clearly expressed the intransigent discourse and political aims.⁷ On 30 September 1930, at the village church of Kalopanayiotis in Nicosia, the Bishop stated:

We should not ask England to grant us Autonomy or Self-government but Union and only Union which is [sic] the only means of our becoming prosperous... [T]he English, like Satan, are depriving us of our liberty... [W]e shall send the English away not with guns or cannons but by the help of God... Cyprus will only prosper when united with Greece.⁸

A few days later at the church of Kaminaria in Limassol, the Bishop made clear that, in order to achieve enosis, the population and all political forces needed to stay united, act with discipline and be prepared for great sacrifices.⁹ In his speeches, the Bishop, using harsh language against the British, emphasized the question of communal autonomy:

We have small snakes which bite us every day without wounding us. These snakes are the English, who bite us every day and suck our blood.¹⁰

[The Governor] deprived us of the rights that we had enjoyed under the barbarous Turks. It was proved that he is more rude and barbarous still than the Turks. The Turks gave us rights in managing our education, Mukhtars [chairmen of village councils] and Rural Constables but the famous imperialist deprived us of all these.¹¹

⁶ Georghallides, 1985, pp. 675-679.

⁷ *Eleftheria*, 'The formation of a political organization', 11 January 1930.

⁸ CSA, SA1/1258/1929, *Bishop of Kyrenia. Speeches by-*, Nicosia Commandant of Police's report, 4 October 1930.

⁹ CSA, SA1/1258/1929, Chief Commandant of Police's report, 5 October 1930.

¹⁰ CSA, SA1/1258/1929, Bishop's speech at the village church of Petra, 7 September 1930.

¹¹ CSA, SA1/1258/1929, Bishop's speech at the village church of Lefka, 20 September 1930.

In the same period, significant political developments within the Turkish-Cypriot community, increasingly apparent during the second half of the 1920s, reinforced the feasibility of anti-colonial politics. As will be analyzed in the next chapter, the 1930 elections for the Legislative Council – the last to be held on the island – demonstrated the growing appeal of a Kemalist nationalist and modernist political force which challenged the traditionalist, pro-British leadership of the Turkish-Cypriot community. Until the 1931 revolt, the increasing cooperation among Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot deputies in the Legislative Council threatened the very operation of the body, on which the British had depended for administering the colony consensually.

Politicization from Below

While the rivalries at the elite level were rising, a new political force emerged during the second half of the 1920s that would seek to redefine Cypriot politics at the grassroots level. The Communist Party of Cyprus (KKK), officially founded in 1926, put forward a social and political programme calling for the overturning of the politico-economic power of the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot elites. The party promoted class politics, rejected nationalism and denounced the demand for enosis. Thanks to its activity in organizing labour associations and its decisive role in the first phase of the nascent labour movement, the KKK had emerged as a significant political force by the end of the 1920s.

Although the party addressed both communities and rejected the established power structure on the island as a whole, its main front within local politics was against the Greek-Cypriot leadership, while its appeal to the Turkish-Cypriots remained limited. The most significant opposition to the party came from the Greek-Cypriot nationalist bourgeoisie and the Church. From the early days of the KKK's existence, these groups denounced its positions and activities, supported repressive measures enacted by the government and, in many cases, launched or supported attacks against the members of the party.

Articles against communism appeared in Greek-Cypriot newspapers even before the foundation of the KKK. In early 1925, *Eleftheria* [*Freedom*], the most popular newspaper among

the Greek-Cypriot community, denounced communism and the toleration that, according to the newspaper, the movement received from the government.¹² *Alitheia* [Truth] welcomed the government's deportation of Nicos Yiavopoulos, a leading figure of the party, from the island. According to the Greek Consul Alexis Kyrou, the colonial authorities deported Yiavopoulos at the instigation of Greek-Cypriot deputies.¹³ In the same year, newspaper sellers in Limassol were beaten on the orders of the mayor for selling the party newspaper *Neos Anthropos* [New Man], while signs bearing party insignia were destroyed outside its offices.¹⁴ The effort to limit the influence of the party also appeared at the institutional level. In July 1925, three contractors founded an association in Limassol for Greek-Cypriot construction workers, in the hope of reducing the appeal of the KKK-controlled Εργατικό Κέντρο Λεμεσού [Limassol Labour Centre] among the workers. In 1931, the founding of the Πανεργατική Ένωση [Pan-labour Association] aimed to attract members and supporters from the leftist Labour Centre of Famagusta.¹⁵ According to testimonies of leading cadres of the period, the actions of right-wingers against the KKK included attacks against labour associations, dismissals of party supporters and even murder attempts.¹⁶

The confrontation peaked in the late 1920s, leading to frequent clashes, provoked mainly by anti-communist elements.¹⁷ In 1928, *Eleftheria* urged the government to 'purge' the working class from 'communist manipulation'.¹⁸ In March 1931, on the anniversary of the outbreak of the War of Greek Independence, party members attempted to distribute flyers in Nicosia and Limassol. Clashes broke out in both towns, leading to arrests, trials and convictions of many communists.¹⁹ A party supporter was stabbed in Nicosia, while a few months later extensive clashes in Larnaca led to the breaking-up of a KKK rally, attacks on party members and the

¹² *Eleftheria*, 'The malignness of communism', 7 January 1925; 'Communism', 28 January 1925.

¹³ *Alitheia*, 'Questions', 10 August 1925; Diplomatic and Historical Archive of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs [hereafter IAYE], Folder A/22/III, Consul of Greece Alexis Kyrou to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 19 June 1931.

¹⁴ *Neos Anthropos*, 'Swashbuckling', 1 March 1925.

¹⁵ CSA, SA1/607/1931, *Communitic activities. Police reports etc.*, Famagusta Commandant of Police's report, 27 August 1931.

¹⁶ Andreas Fantis, *Το κυπριακό συνδικαλιστικό κίνημα στα χρόνια της Αγγλοκρατίας (1878-1960)* [The Cypriot trade union movement in the years of English Rule (1878-1960)] (Nicosia: 2005), vol. 1, 76-77.

¹⁷ NA, FCO 141/2455, Acting Governor to Secretary of State Lord Passfield, 21 August 1931.

¹⁸ *Eleftheria*, 'The labour question', 4 July 1928.

¹⁹ *Eleftheria*, 'And an incident of the communists', 28 March 1931; 'Trials of communists', 1 April 1931; Grekos, 1994, p. 7.

destruction of the offices of the Larnaca Labour Centre.²⁰ In a meeting after the events attended by the Commissioner of Larnaca, Greek-Cypriot politicians and the mayor, the latter demanded measures for the displacement of communism from the town.²¹ In the same period, the Chief Commandant of Police and the Acting Governor observed that an 'energetic anti-communist propaganda' had been set in motion by the Church, members of the Legislative Council and nationalist politicians.²²

During this period, the Church started playing an active role against the KKK. In 1931, the Holy Synod decided that bishops should warn communists that, if they did not comply with the principles of the Church, punishments would be imposed on them, to the point of excommunication.²³ At a conference of representatives of Nicosia associations held at the archbishopric for the purpose of 'fighting communism', shopkeepers, factory owners, craftsmen, contractors and teachers were urged to try to bring communists back to the Orthodox Church. Unrepentant communists should be excluded from employment. A circular issued after the conference further urged ecclesiastical associations, school committees and municipal authorities to always prefer contractors 'pure from communist contaminant' and to demand that contractors prefer non-communist workers. Furthermore, parents were urged to denounce communist teachers to the Education Office and the Archbishop, and to take their children from school until the removal of communist teachers. Lastly, addressing all Greek-Cypriots, the circular stressed that communist-affiliated labour centres should not be visited, 'not even out of simple curiosity'.²⁴

In mid-1931, the Holy Synod excommunicated the poet and KKK member Tefkros Anthias, while many clerics published articles against communism and the party in local

²⁰ *Eleftheria*, 'The communists provoke and attack', 1 August 1931; 'Unprecedented popular uprising. Communists chased and injured', 19 August 1931.

²¹ *Eleftheria*, 'Due to the comrades', 26 August 1931.

²² NA, FCO 141/2455, Chief Commandant of Police to the Colonial Secretary, 10 August 1931.

²³ *Eleftheria*, 'Holy Synod proceedings. Communism', 6 May 1931.

²⁴ CSA, SA1/607/1931, resolution of the conference, 'Communism in Cyprus. Measures for fighting it', 22 August 1931. In the same spirit, a proclamation addressed to the Greek-Cypriot population in the same period stressed: 'The communist worm which threatens to undermine the ideals of Religion, Fatherland, Society, Family and all the other high ideals with which the Greek race lives and dies, compels us to unite and face the revolutionary activities of the mercenary agents of Moscow'. CSA, SA1/1039/1931, *Trade Union Movement in Cyprus*, 'Proclamation', 11 August 1931.

newspapers and the journal of the Church, *Apostolos Varnavas* [*The Apostle Barnabus*].²⁵ Nationalist politicians further suggested that the government prepare a list of all Greek-Cypriot communist schoolmasters, and requested that the local committees in their place of appointment refuse to accept them for the following school year and close the schools in protest. At a meeting of the Orthodox Christian Board of Education in the same year, it was recommended that the definition of ‘misconduct’ under the corresponding article of the 1929 Elementary Education Law should be expanded so as to include the affiliation of school teachers with communism.²⁶

The KKK’s positions and activity brought it into sharp political contrast with all other political forces. The differentiation from both nationalists and pro-government Greek-Cypriot politicians allowed the party to acquire a distinct position in the political spectrum. At the same time, its insistence on ideological purity partially accounted for the KKK’s failure to appeal successfully to broader strata, such as the peasantry. As the culture of nationalism became increasingly dominant within religious Cypriot society, the KKK’s philosophical atheism and its rejection of enosis alienated a portion of workers and peasants, otherwise sympathetic to the party’s class militancy. In this context, the KKK started developing a position for a united front, based on trade union mobilization that would be inclusive of those lower-class groups that did not fully share the party’s ideology.

In its first congress in 1926, the KKK called for the collaboration between the party and non-communists on the basis of an anti-imperialist front. The party was to hold a pan-Cypriot convention of both Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots, which would work towards the achievement of self-government.²⁷ The congress put forward a set of demands, upon which collaboration should

²⁵ *Eleftheria*, ‘Excommunication of an atheist teacher’, 2 May 1931. See also ‘The offenders. Education and communism’, 25 April 1931; ‘Communism and equality’, 10 June 1931; ‘Communism and religion’, 4 August 1931; ‘Communism and property’, 5 August 1931; ‘Communism and motherland’, 26 August 1931. *Apostolos Varnavas*, ‘Identification of methods and principles’, 23 (1931), 361-362; ‘How women are regarded by communists or bolshevists’, 29 (1931), 534-536; ‘The bankruptcy of bolshevism’, 34 (1931), 617-620.

²⁶ CSA, SA1/1078/1931, Director of Education to the Colonial Secretary, 18 August 1931; NA, FCO 141/2455, Acting Governor to Secretary of State Lord Passfield, 21 August 1931. According to the Director of Education, there were 12 schoolmasters registered as communists in 1931 and 12 more suspected of communist sympathies.

²⁷ *Πολιτικές Αποφάσεις και Ψηφίσματα Συνεδρίων του Κομμουνιστικού Κόμματος Κύπρου (KKK) και του Ανορθωτικού Κόμματος Εργαζόμενου Λαού (ΑΚΕΛ)* [*Political Decisions and Congress Resolutions of the KKK and AKEL*] (Nicosia: 2014), 23-40.

be based, while stressing that the party should not lose its independence within the front.²⁸ A year later, the 1927 Extraordinary Congress of the KKK called for the unity of nationalists and communists on a ‘united front against imperialism’ for the liberation of Cyprus.²⁹

The necessity for a common anti-imperialist front aiming at the independence or autonomy of Cyprus was stressed in many articles in the party newspaper. The KKK hoped that the demand for independence would bring about collaboration among different political forces and parties, irrespective of their overall political programmes. As early as 1925 an article in *Neos Anthropos* that discussed the tactics of communist parties in colonial territories argued that the development of capitalism in the colonies tended to create anti-colonial movements of a petit-bourgeois character. These movements could, however, be seen as potential allies with communist parties, as they jointly opposed Western imperialism.³⁰ A 1927 article invited all political forces to a ‘common front against the British’ at both the leadership and the grassroots level. A year later, *Neos Anthropos* called for an even broader front, including bourgeois deputies, petit-bourgeois politicians and nationalists, with a view to form a common programme with common claims.³¹

Throughout the second half of the 1920s, the party put forward the demand for independence, hoping that this would allow the inclusion of the Turkish-Cypriots in the common front. This position was part of the official resolution of the party’s First Congress, and was inscribed in the party statutes. Independence was considered the only solution that would liberate workers and peasants from the double yoke of British capital and the Greek bourgeoisie.³² The rejection of enosis was publicly expressed on many occasions.³³ A 1925 article in *Neos Anthropos* stated:

²⁸ The claims put forward by the Congress included universal suffrage for men and women over 18 years of age, formation of a representative legislative body with duties of Parliament, formation of a government accountable to the Parliament and military evacuation of the island and assignment of its guarding to local militia.

²⁹ Yiannos Katsourides, ‘Το Κομματικό Σύστημα στην Κύπρο 1878-1931: Συγκρότηση και Ιδιομορφίες [The Party System in Cyprus 1878-1931: Formation and peculiarities]’ (University of Nicosia D.Phil Thesis, 2009), 394.

³⁰ *Neos Anthropos*, ‘Enosis or autonomy’, 26 October 1925.

³¹ Katsourides, 2009, p. 395.

³² The First Congress of the KKK stressed that the economic and political liberation of Cyprus would only come with the establishment of a labour-peasant Republic which would join the Balkan Labour-peasant Federation.

³³ The party’s manifesto on the Pan-Hellenic Games of 1925 ended with the slogans ‘Down with Enosis’ and ‘Long live the Independence of Cyprus’. *Neos Anthropos*, ‘Manifesto of the KKK for the Pan-Hellenic’, 25 April 1925.

No dear patriotic sirs! We do not want union with mother Greece.. The people have awakened and know all too well that the Union of Cyprus means greater slavery, bitter life, lawless injustice... [The] people are not so stupid to become even more oppressed under Greek despotism... Union means economic death.³⁴

A year later the newspaper asserted:

The proper solution to the Cyprus question will be only achieved through a labour-peasant front of Greeks and Turks... [H]owever small the Turkish minority may be, it cannot remain uninvolved in our struggle for greater political liberties. Such a struggle cannot even be conceived without the active involvement of the Turkish element.³⁵

In November 1928, the Second Pan-Cypriot Congress called again for a common front against the British, whose ultimate goal was the end of colonial rule on the island.³⁶ Again, the party stressed that such a front could not be based on the politics of enosis, as this hindered the cooperation of Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots. Nonetheless, cooperation with the supporters of enosis was considered possible. These first moves towards the convergence with its rivals - the Church and the Greek-Cypriot nationalist elite - revealed a growing political dilemma within the party. The question of enosis would become central in the late 1930s and early 1940s, and would lead to the gradual transformation of the party. That process became especially visible after the foundation of AKEL in 1941, which replaced the KKK a few years later. By the 1940s, the debate had shifted from a front against colonial rule to the so-called 'national question'. Accordingly, the strategy for creating a united front gradually became less about finding common political grounds with other political forces, and more about adopting an almost unconditional enosis policy, often to the point of succumbing to the party's rivals and adopting their political positions.

At the end of the 1920s, as the KKK continued to gain influence, the polemic from the Greek-Cypriot elite and repressive measures from the colonial government intensified. The Greek-Cypriot leadership was concerned about both the party's role in mobilizing the lower strata of the population, and its positions and activity that related to the national question. In 1929, *Eleftheria* started a campaign against the party's position for autonomy and self-

³⁴ *Neos Anthropos*, 'No we do not want it', 1 March 1925.

³⁵ Cited in Pan-Cypriot Labour Federation, *Ιστορία ΠΣΕ-ΠΕΟ 1941-1991 [History of the PSE-PEO 1941-1991]* (Nicosia: PEO publications, 1991), p. 23.

³⁶ *Political Decisions*, Second Congress of the KKK, pp. 41-49.

government, stressing the imperative of enosis. The newspaper, the mouthpiece of the intransigent nationalists, also criticized the positions of the moderate nationalists in the Legislative Council and noted the declining interest in enosis among the peasantry.³⁷ In the same period, the intransigent nationalists made some initial steps towards the formation of a radical nationalist group. The Εθνική Ριζοσπαστική Ένωσις κύπρου [National Radical Union of Cyprus – EREK], which operated in secret after 1929 and made its official appearance in October 1931, declared that it would fight for the union of Cyprus with Greece but also against communism.

The polemic against communism was in fact a main point of agreement between the intransigent and the moderate nationalists. In mid-1931, the Bishop of Kition toured the countryside and after preaching the gospel, he warned attendees against communism. On one occasion, after holding mass, he publicly accused two KKK supporters of propaganda against the Christian religion, and said that he would report the case to the Holy Synod.³⁸ As indicated by the results of the 1930 elections for the Legislative Council, however, in which the party participated for the first time, it had managed to become a distinct and constantly growing political force. Although the KKK failed to elect any candidate, its island-wide appearance and the percentage it gained - around 16% - had a major impact on public opinion.³⁹ The major breakthrough, however, came a few months later, in 1931, when Christodoulos Galatopoulos, supported by the party, prevailed in a by-election in the district of Paphos.

In the context of its growing confrontation with the nationalists, the KKK held a Pan-Cypriot conference in July 1931. The conference addressed the growing social unrest on the island, in which party members were actively involved. Some of the participants, many of whom were younger members, proposed that the party adopt a less confrontational stance towards the nationalists, on the grounds of the latter's increasingly critical attitude towards the British.⁴⁰ Some participants even suggested that the party should abandon the line of independence and

³⁷ Panayiotou, 1999, pp. 231-232.

³⁸ CSA, SA1/607/1931, Limassol Commandant of Police's report to the Chief Commandant, 3 August 1931.

³⁹ See Protopapas, 2012, pp. 285-306.

⁴⁰ Minas Perdios, *Δοκίμιο Ιστορίας Κ.Κ.Κ.-Α.Κ.Ε.Λ.* [Essay on the History of K.K.K.-A.K.E.L.] (Nicosia: AKEL Central Committee, 1968), 73, 86, 91; Grekos, 1994, p. 7.

fight for enosis. Both suggestions were rejected by the Conference; a few months later, in October 1931, the questions discussed at the conference were raised in the streets.⁴¹

The October Revolt

In the early 1930s, the developments in Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot politics and the growing social discontent became increasingly reflected in the political positions of the deputies from both communities in the Legislative Council. Most importantly, in April 1931, Necati Bey, the newly-elected Kemalist deputy, broke the traditional common front between the British and the Turkish-Cypriot deputies, and voted together with his Greek-Cypriot counterparts, against the government's budgetary estimates for the following year. As the resolution did not carry the necessary number of votes, Governor Storrs eventually used an Order in Council to pass the respective law through the opposition of the Legislative Council five months later, thus adding to popular resentment.

In this context, the Greek-Cypriot deputies were forced to adopt a more vigorous anti-government policy, in line with their voters' indignation towards the colonial authorities' harsh financial and administrative policy. The moderate unionist deputies were the first to take up a militant stance in the autumn of 1931. The Bishop of Kition had been informed that EREK, the intransigent unionists' group, would be transformed into a political organization on 18 October. EREK would personally denounce the stance of the bishop, as well as all the moderate deputies, and call for their resignations from the Legislative Council. On 17 October, the Bishop resigned and addressed the population with a proclamation of his own, urging for disobedience against British tyranny. Four days later, all Greek-Cypriot deputies resigned and gave public speeches at the Nicosia Commercial Club, triggering a series of riots that began in Nicosia and soon expanded across the island.

The revolt constituted a culmination of the previous period's mobilizations, and at the same time represented a significant transformation of the means of demonstrations. Most importantly, the riots, which lasted one week and especially affected all urban centres on the island, directly targeted the colonial authorities. This confrontational attitude signalled the

⁴¹ The Conference also decided to move the party's headquarters from Limassol to Nicosia.

breakdown of the politics of consensus, and pointed to the emergence of a new, active political player: the lower classes of Cypriot society. The change in the tactics of popular mobilization can be attributed to a great extent to the discourse and practices introduced in to Cypriot politics by the KKK during the second half of the 1920s and early 1930s. As will be analyzed in Chapter 4, the party had become the driving force behind labour mobilizations and the formation of labour centres and trade unions across the island. By 1931, under the growing guidance of the KKK, the newly formed trade unions had articulated a cohesive political programme, and had spearheaded the first phase of what would become a bi-communal labour movement. Organized labour used militant action – mainly strikes and public demonstrations – to put forward the claims of the emerging working class. At the same time, the party openly confronted the Greek-Cypriot elites and called for the end of colonial rule. As new forms of organization and mobilization were developed, popular discontent became ever more openly expressed. The outbreak of the anti-colonial October revolt, starting from the capital of Nicosia, expressed to a great extent the growing social and political turmoil.

The immediate causes of the revolt and the standoff in the Legislative Council were political. The acute economic hardship of the island's population, seen as deriving principally from heavy taxation, the indebtedness of a large portion of the population to the money-lenders and the global depression had forced many deputies to oppose government policy, in an attempt to maintain their credibility with their voters. As discussed in Chapter 1, the revolt included large-scale protests and attacks on government buildings, revealing the population's outrage against government's economic and fiscal policy. Accordingly, the decision of the moderate nationalist Greek-Cypriot deputies to follow the example of the Bishop of Kition by resigning from their positions and demanding enosis can be seen as an attempt to gain the trust of the electorate. To present the community with an immaterial goal, and promote enosis as the solution to the island's economic woes, was seen as a way to outmanoeuvre the intransigent nationalists, in the hope of securing the leadership over the Greek-Cypriot community. The resignations and the uprising that followed had the effect of temporarily negating the tensions between the intransigent and the moderate camps, thus securing the Church's political initiative and reinforcing enosist politics. A key component in the Greek-Cypriot version of nationalism, as advocated primarily by the Church (the biggest landowner on the island), was the determination of the affluent classes to secure their economic power and prevent reforms that would threaten it,

such as the introduction of a fair tax system. In that respect, the demand for the union with Greece held a very practical significance for both elite groups. The appropriation of the revolt by the Church allowed for its emergence as the political organization that could express the demands of the population, and claim a leading role in the evolution of Greek-Cypriot politics. Enosis was a demand that both incorporated socioeconomic considerations and the aspirations of an anti-colonial struggle.

In this context, the KKK initially denounced the riots.⁴² According to Ploutis Servas, General Secretary of the KKK from 1936 to 1945, the party had not participated in the revolt and had denounced it strongly as ‘a manifestation of the Church and the haut-bourgeois’.⁴³ That view is supported by Fifis Ioannou, General Secretary of AKEL from 1945 until 1949. According to Ioannou, Charalambos Vatis, a prominent party cadre, from the first days of the riots denounced the whole movement for being nationalist and directed by the Greek-Cypriot bourgeoisie.⁴⁴ This decision of the leadership, however, was met with reservations from party members. Ioannes Mavros, a party veteran, testified that at a meeting held in the early stages of the revolt, he had argued that the party should participate in the movement and had received a negative response from Vatis.⁴⁵

Nevertheless, on 22 or 23 October, a meeting of the Central Committee decided that the party should indeed change tactics and collaborate with the nationalists, so that they would not monopolize the popular uprising. In a meeting at the Archbishopric, a delegation of the KKK offered to collaborate with the Church against colonialism, even though it retained its disagreements with the nationalists on the aims of the uprising and the character of the planned demonstrations. Furthermore, Vatis denounced enosis and countered that the aim of the revolt should instead be a workers' republic. Vatis warned against the use of the Greek flag, as it alienated the Turkish-Cypriots. Eventually, the KKK published its own communiqué on 23 October, and Vatis addressed a rally outside the Archbishopric, pledging that the party would

⁴² According to Grekos, who bases his research on statements and accounts of veteran KKK and AKEL party members, some of the party's supporters and members participated in the revolt at the very beginning, at least in Nicosia. See Grekos, 1994, pp. 11-15.

⁴³ Ploutis Servas, *Κυπριακό, Ευθύνες* [*The Cyprus Question, Responsibilities*] (Nicosia: Epiphaniou, 1980), 117.

⁴⁴ Grekos, 1994, p. 13, article of Fifis Ioannou in *Apogeymatini* [*Evening Standard*], 26 March 1976.

⁴⁵ Grekos, 1994, p. 29.

struggle against colonialism and for the release of those arrested.⁴⁶ The communiqué emphasized the need for a common front of nationalists and communists against British imperialism, and called for party members to lead the struggle for the withdrawal of Britain from the island. It also stressed that the differences between the programmatic aims of nationalists and of communists should not constitute an obstacle for the formation of a joint front, and that such differences would be resolved after Britain's withdrawal. Furthermore, the text criticized party organizations for the neutral position they had held during the early stages of the uprising and invited the nationalist workers to co-organize a common front.

The change of party line and the decision to join the uprising was dictated by the danger of isolation, as long as the party abstained from popular militant acts of protest. In the following years, the KKK's attempts to converge with the nationalist leadership on the national question and its gradual endorsement of the dominant ideology of nationalism would become increasingly visible. A year after the revolt, leading figures of the party, such as Vatis and Costas Skeleas (then General Secretary), were denounced by the Communist International and were subsequently deposed, without taking up any other positions within the party hierarchy. The party's initial stance on the 1931 revolt would attract criticism for years to come. In 1951, a resolution issued by the Central Committee of AKEL at its seventh congress stated:

The party responded to the popular outbreak of 1931 with a wrong line and became isolated from the broad masses. At the time, the party did not manage to take advantage of the maturation of popular discontent and the development of an anti-imperialist sentiment of national liberation among the people.⁴⁷

Although the KKK maintained its anti-nationalist position until the beginning of the 1940s, it seems that the events before and during October 1931 had led to a debate on the national question. The very decision of the KKK to collaborate with the nationalist Greek-Cypriot leadership during the revolt can be seen as the beginning of a shift in the party's position on the national question. That shift was completed in the early 1940s, with the formal adoption of the demand for enosis.

⁴⁶ NA, CO 67/240/15, *Riots in Cyprus: Deportations*, Nicosia Commandant of Police's report to the Chief Commandant, 25 October 1931; Governor's despatches to Secretary of State Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, 20 November and 2 December 1931; Grekos, 1994, pp. 12-14.

⁴⁷ Contemporary Social History Archives [hereafter as ASKI], F-20/21/47, *Towards the Seventh Congress of AKEL*, AKEL's report 'A brief review of our party's organizational policy until the Sixth Congress (1949)', 1949.

At the same time, the presence of a KKK delegation at the meeting at the Archbishopric demonstrated that the party was considered a political force that had to be taken into consideration. It also revealed the confusion that characterized the Greek-Cypriot elites. Despite their active role in the unfolding events, these elites were caught by surprise as much as the KKK leadership and the colonial government by the magnitude and the spontaneity of the uprising.⁴⁸ Only a few days after the attempts for a common front between nationalists and communists against the colonial authorities, the Greek-Cypriot leadership backtracked and attempted to distance itself from the revolt. On 2 November, Archbishop Cyril requested a meeting with the Governor and later in the month he issued a circular and a despatch addressed to Storrs, apologizing for the revolt and expressing his regret for the arson attack on Government House.⁴⁹

2.2 The Archiepiscopal Question

In the wake of the revolt, the British imposed an authoritarian regime on the colony. They suspended all elections, repealed the semi-liberal institutional framework of the previous period, and imposed a series of repressive measures against the Church and the Left. Their goal was to eliminate communal autonomy and suppress all political activities. For the government, the revolt provided an ideal opportunity to take action against all its political opponents, even those with little or no participation in the riots and their outbreak. Most significantly, communist activity was completely repressed, and steps were taken to control the influence of the emerging modernist Turkish-Cypriot leadership, as will be analyzed in Chapters 4 and 3, respectively. In these circumstances, a significant portion of the Greek-Cypriot elite decided to cooperate with the government, with a view to protecting its interests. The very idea of abolishing the elections was actually suggested by P. Cacoyiannis, who had served as deputy of the Legislative Council.⁵⁰ This stance was well received by the British, who appointed leading figures of the

⁴⁸ In his official report on the revolt, Governor Storrs stated: 'There is no evidence to show that the outbreak was premeditated or prearranged. Any such theory would be sufficiently contradicted by the haphazard nature of the deplorable events'. Parliamentary Papers, 1932, Command 4045, vol. 6, p. 31, Storrs to Secretary of State Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, 11 February 1932.

⁴⁹ *Apostolos Varnavas*, Archbishop Cyril's circular and despatch to Governor Storrs, 2 and 19 November, 1931.

⁵⁰ The idea of abolishing the constitution had also been discussed in mid-1929, when the Acting Governor suggested the formation of a new Legislative Council. The new council was to be composed of the Governor and 33 members (15 official, 3 nominated and 15 unofficial members), who would reach the Council through a mixed process of election and selection, with three quarters of them to be bona fide agriculturalists. NA, CO 67/227/4, *Proposals for*

Greek-Cypriot elite to public posts. As Governor Stubbs reported in 1933, ‘we need to breed such a class that will be willing to cooperate with us’.⁵¹ Nevertheless, a small part of the elite, rallying gradually around the acting Archbishop Leontios, who had succeeded Cyril after his death in 1933, continued to oppose the regime. Under the leadership of Leontios, Greek-Cypriot nationalism would be reinforced, although the prospect of enosis was receding and the future fate of the island was becoming ever more unpredictable, not least in the context of the growing destabilization in the Middle East and, from 1936 onwards, the growing tensions in the Mediterranean.⁵²

Following the October revolt the British deported two of the three bishops of the island – the bishops of Kyrenia and Kition, as well as eight other prominent Greek-Cypriots. After Cyril’s death, Leontios, the Bishop of Paphos and only remaining bishop on the island, assumed the position of *Locum Tenens* of the vacant Archiepiscopal See. The absence of the two Bishops from Cyprus constituted an obstacle for the canonical election of a permanent successor to Cyril. According to the charter of the Church of Cyprus, holding a Holy Synod required the attendance of all three Bishops.⁵³ The colonial government refused to allow the exiles to return, and with the *Locum Tenens*’ and the exiles’ decision to postpone the elections until they could be held according to canon law, a deadlock was created. The archiepiscopal question would soon evolve into a multi-faceted political confrontation between the Church and the government, as well as between different factions within the Church itself. This confrontation was not resolved until 1947.

Immediately after Leontios assumed duties as *Locum Tenens*, the exiled Bishops made clear their positions regarding the archiepiscopal elections in their correspondence to him. While both rejected the possibility of a settlement before their return to Cyprus, the despatches indicated the different concerns of each of the old rivals, giving a clear image of the political confrontation that would follow. Nicodemos, the Bishop of Kition, was aware that he was being retrospectively regarded as the leader of the October revolt and attempted to pre-empt an

reform of the constitution, Arthur Dawe’s memorandum, 3 April 1929; NA, CO 67/256/7, *Municipal Corporations (Amendment) Law, 1934*, Governor Palmer to the Assistant Under-Secretary of State, 2 January 1934.

⁵¹ NA, CO 67/251/3, *Political situation*, Governor Edward Stubbs to Secretary of State Cunliffe-Lister, 4 June 1933.

⁵² See Larry Pratt, *East of Malta, West of Suez; Britain’s Mediterranean Crisis, 1936-1939* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

⁵³ See *Charter of the Most Holy Church of Cyprus* (1914), article 2.

intervention by the Ecumenical and the other Patriarchates during his absence from the island, which could cost him his future election. He therefore highlighted the danger of dissent within the Church, and stressed that any intervention from the other Orthodox Churches would be uncanonical, due to the Church of Cyprus' autocephaly, and would render any result void.⁵⁴ In this event, the prolongation of the deadlock and the growing popular discontent soon forced him to change his position, as the Bishop wanted to appear willing to sacrifice his own candidacy in favour of a quick settlement.

Meanwhile, the Bishop of Kyrenia desired a settlement without the immediate participation of the Locum Tenens. Such an outcome would only serve to reinforce Leontios' prestige at the expense of the exiled bishops, leading to his own election. For that reason, the Bishop of Kyrenia stressed that the Locum Tenens could not, acting unilaterally and on his own initiative, postpone the elections without such a decision by the Holy Synod. For Leontios, the exile of the two leading bishops presented him with a great opportunity. A lengthy postponement of the elections would only provide him time to gradually consolidate his position within the Church and among the congregation, and convert his temporary status into a permanent arrangement. He had no real vested interest in persuading the government to let his rivals return to the island.

From the very beginning, the archiepiscopal question aroused the interest of all concerned parties, both inside and outside Cyprus. It attracted the attention of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the colonial authorities, the secular Greek-Cypriot elite and parts of the Greek-Cypriot population. According to a report that reached the colonial authorities in June 1935, the Ecumenical Patriarch had decided to send the Bishop of Trebizond on a mission to convene with the Patriarchs of Jerusalem and Alexandria, and then to proceed to Cyprus. This was seen as a sign that the Patriarchate was willing to mediate a solution to the archiepiscopal question in Cyprus. As the Bishop's visit did not ultimately happen, Acting Governor Battershill suspected – in contrast with the explanation provided by the report – that the Bishop had been informed that his intervention was not welcome.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ *Apostolos Varnavas*, 1 (1934), pp. 11-13.

⁵⁵ NA, CO 67/262/18, *Archiepiscopal Question. Possibility of a Settlement*, Acting Governor to Secretary of State Malcolm MacDonald, 16 August 1935.

The colonial authorities viewed the archiepiscopal question as a clearly political matter, and as a key barometer of Greek-Cypriot tendencies. From its beginning, all aspects of the question, including the attitude of the clergy and the secular elite as well as the reaction of the population, held the absolute attention of the colonial officials.⁵⁶ Most importantly, the government was preoccupied with preventing any of the three bishops from being elected to the vacant See. Only a few days after Archbishop Cyril's death, Governor Stubbs telegraphed the Colonial Office reporting his intention to intervene in the elections by introducing legislation that would bar the exiled bishops from the election.⁵⁷ The government's overall goal was to restrict the political power of the Church and eliminate its ethnarchic role. As Governor Palmer stated,

[I]t must be clearly understood – (a) That the deported Bishops will not be allowed to return to Cyprus under any circumstances. (b) That though election is perfectly free, Government will not again recognize an Archbishop as Ethnarch or as having any right to interfere in secular or political affairs, but solely as spiritual head of his own Orthodox Christian Communion in Cyprus. (c) ... In regard to the Archiepiscopal problem ... it is of immediate importance both to Cyprus and to the Orthodox Church as an institution that the Church should abandon the political role it has pursued so long in Cyprus.⁵⁸

For the majority of the secular elite, the archiepiscopal question was strongly related to the question of the administration of Church property. The vacancy of the Archiepiscopal See and of the two Bishoprics was considered an important factor in the continued mismanagement of Church property and the squandering of its wealth. At the same time, the archiepiscopal question was seen as an ideal opportunity for asking the legislative intervention of the government so as to transfer control over the wealth of the Church to lay members. In 1933 and 1934, ecclesiastical committees, village commissions, the mayor of Nicosia and a number of priests submitted petitions to the government, many of them identical. The signees represented 164 towns and villages across the island and 140,000 Greek-Cypriots – out of a total Greek-

⁵⁶ There are numerous reports by all ranks of the administration regarding the actions and attitude of the Church, the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Orthodox Churches, the secular elite and the Greek-Cypriot population. See NA, CO 67/262/18.

⁵⁷ NA, CO 67/252/13, *Vacancy for the Archbishop of Cyprus*, Governor's telegram, 20 November 1933.

⁵⁸ NA, CO 67/262/18, Governor Palmer to Secretary of State Malcolm MacDonald, 18 July 1935.

Cypriot population amounting to 276,500, according to the 1931 census.⁵⁹ The petitions called for the government's legislative intervention for the solution of the archiepiscopal question and the administration of ecclesiastical property. Notably, the monastery of Ayios Panteleimon was also in favour of such an enactment. Many of the petitions, mostly for the election of Church committees, were also addressed to the clergy.⁶⁰

The petitioners emphasized the corruption in the management of the Church property and revenue, and stressed that this would be terminated only when Church economics would be subjected to lay oversight. In particular, they stressed that Church property and revenue were being constantly embezzled, squandered and misappropriated by the Church committees charged with their management. The members of these committees were accused of treating Church property as 'a family fief', which they used for their own interests.⁶¹ The petitions reflected the indignation of the rural laity and a significant part of the rural clergy and demanded that at least the surpluses of the Church's property and revenue should be dedicated for meeting the needs of the lower clergy and the population. In the same spirit, the newspaper *Paphos* reported in 1934 that 'thousands of pounds were given by the members of the Church committees to their friends, family or groomsmen', instead of being used for providing landless farmers with property, philanthropy and the support of education.⁶² The petition movement encountered strenuous opposition from the higher clergy, whose interests were threatened by the petitioners' demands, and the government refused to intervene.

The confrontation between the laity and the higher clergy can be clearly illustrated by a petition addressed to the Governor in late 1934. The petitioners asked for the immediate introduction of a law that would drastically put Church property – emphatically described in the text as belonging to the people – under state control, and terminate the corruption inherent in its administration. The petition also emphasized that such legislation would not intervene in dogmatic or religious questions, but would only deal with the financial administration of the

⁵⁹ CSA, SA1/759/1934/1, 1) *Archiepiscopal Question*. 2) *Ecclesiastical Property Administration Question*. *Petitions on-*.

⁶⁰ Two-thirds of these Church committees were composed of clerics appointed by the bishops, and one third of laymen indirectly elected by the male population. Given that the 'property-less' and the indebted were precluded from being elected, most of the lay members on the committees were local notables.

⁶¹ The Church's revenue derived mainly from the lands it leased to farmers, commercial activities, the licenses for marriages and divorces and the fees collected by the Church Courts.

⁶² Rappas, 2008, p. 265.

‘biggest popular property’, which was being squandering and would eventually be exhausted, unless the government intervened. It is particularly interesting that any reference to religious matters is absent from the petition. In contrast with all the other petitions, there is no reference to the archiepiscopal question, namely the vacancy of the Archiepiscopal See, nor to the Bishoprics of Kition and Kyrenia. The petitioners addressed the government, seen as a powerful ally, and aimed solely at restricting the economic and political power of the Church. The archiepiscopal question, while a matter of indifference in itself to the secular elites, in fact presented them with an ideal opportunity to mobilize the population against the Church in a moment of crisis. The movement went to great lengths to appeal to the rural laity and, to a certain extent, also to the rural clergy.⁶³ As a significant part of the peasantry were tenants of the Church and the monasteries, and because the majority of the rural clergy were living in miserable conditions and they were frequently paid in arrears, these groups saw in the movement an opportunity to secure fixed and adequate remuneration. The petitioners included in their proposals the foundation of an Agricultural Bank which would issue loans on easy terms, thus alleviating the burden of debt for the rural population. The government did not take action before 1937, when the Churches and Monasteries (Investigation and Audit) Law was enacted. That, however, proved the high point of the movement. Its activity would gradually weaken, while the tactics utilized by the Church during the archiepiscopal question, as well as its overall strategy throughout the 1930s and 1940s, would allow the Church to grow even stronger.

From its very beginning, the archiepiscopal question attracted the attention of the press, which noted the rivalries within the Church. The debate would thus occupy a central space in the public sphere. Some influential newspapers, including the conservative *Phoni tis Kyprou* [*Voice of Cyprus*] and *Neos Kypriakos Phylax* [*The New Cypriot Guardian*], both published in Nicosia, supported the stand of the exiled Bishops and the Locum Tenens. Meanwhile, a larger number of papers, including *Paphos* and the Limassol-based *Chronos* [*Time*], adopted an increasingly critical tone as the election dragged on. *Chronos* stressed that the solution to the question should not depend on the ‘personal whims of the two exiled Bishops’ who insisted on their position ‘out of stubbornness, caprice or individual interest’.⁶⁴ Throughout the spring and summer of 1936, *Eleftheria* systematically promoted the Bishop of Kition’s gradual shift in favour for a quick

⁶³ CSA, SA1/759/1934/1, Governor Palmer’s report to Secretary of State Cunliffe-Lister, September 1934.

⁶⁴ Rappas, *ibid.*

settlement of the question.⁶⁵ The Bishop had reportedly made contacts with the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Greek Government, favouring an election under the aegis of the Church of Alexandria or Jerusalem.⁶⁶ From early on, the old rivalry between the Bishops of Kition and Kyrenia had resurfaced, with the issue of the archiepiscopal election as the point of conflict. In June 1936, on the occasion of King George V's birthday, the Bishop of Kition openly denounced the decision of the Locum Tenens (supported by the Bishop of Kyrenia) to forbid any commemorative ceremonies in honour of the King. Later in the year, the Bishop of Kition publicly supported the early election of a prelate to fill the vacant See, while the Bishop of Kyrenia and the Locum Tenens were in favour of postponing the election, both thinking that an election at a later date would favour their own claim.⁶⁷ Their procrastination compelled the Bishop of Kition to share his concerns over the two others' indifference in resolving the archiepiscopal question, and he accused Leontios of deliberately delaying the settlement.⁶⁸

By 1937, newspapers in Cyprus, such as *Paphos*, and in Greece, such as *Patris* [*Fatherland*], deplored the formation of two parties. One group supported an immediate resolution in order to protect the 'madly squandered' property of the Church and provide the Church and the community with a leader.⁶⁹ Their rivals advocated the prolongation of the current situation until elections could be carried out under the proper conditions. Any other settlement would signify a recognition of the right of the colonial government to interfere with ecclesiastical matters on the island, as well as an indirect acceptance of the right to depose any Bishop, either by outright dismissal or by compelling him to give up his See and leave Cyprus.

Government Intervention

In the years following the October revolt, the measures taken by the government against the Church in part resembled the notorious Penal Laws of Ireland that had been repealed a decade earlier. These measures would constitute central points of confrontation between the two

⁶⁵ Rappas, 2008, p. 265.

⁶⁶ NA, CO 67/267/9, *Archiepiscopal Question, Archbishopric of Cyprus*, translation of extracts from a letter of Ierotheos Kykkotis, correspondent of *Eleftheria* in Athens, to the newspaper, 3 June 1936.

⁶⁷ NA, CO 67/267/9, article published in the Athenian newspaper *Proini* (*Morning Standard*) on 20 November 1936.

⁶⁸ Rappas, 2008, p. 266.

⁶⁹ NA, CO 67/267/9, article published in the Athenian newspaper *Patris* (*Fatherland*) on 7 June 1936; Rappas, 2008, p. 267.

institutions.⁷⁰ A few weeks after the revolt, the government enacted the Bells (Regulation) Law. As the ringing of bells had been used during the revolt for assembling Greek-Cypriot demonstrators, and generally for the celebration of Greek national anniversaries, the main provision of the law stipulated that permits would be required to ring bells.⁷¹ The reaction of the Church was immediate. Archbishop Cyril gave strict instructions to the church committees and village priests to refuse to apply for permits and to stop the ringing of all Church bells on the island in protest. The Archbishop threatened the clergy with immediate dismissal if they ignored his order.⁷²

Most importantly, the enactment of legislation on the archiepiscopal election was thoroughly contemplated by both the Cyprus government and the Colonial Office after late 1935. Being concerned about the possibility of a quick election of an ‘unacceptable person’ to the position of archbishop, the Governor wanted to have legislation ready to prevent such a development.⁷³ In particular, Palmer suggested that the government determine which candidates would be eligible, and exclude those that have been ‘deported from the Island in consequence of seditious activities’. Palmer also wished that candidates should be British subjects, and would abstain from secular affairs if elected. In other words, he wanted to exclude the two exiled Bishops and in fact any Greek, pro-enosis candidate, and to ensure that the new Archbishop would not have any political role or participation in secular affairs, such as education.⁷⁴ Overall, the Governor sought to force the Church to abandon its claims to ethnarchy. To justify such a

⁷⁰ The Penal Laws were fully repealed by Britain in 1920, under the Government of Ireland Act 1920.

⁷¹ CSA, SA1/1404/1931, *The Bells (Regulation) Law*, minutes by the Nicosia Commissioner, 6 and 9 November 1942.

⁷² *Apostolos Varnavas*, archiepiscopal circular, 14 December 1931). Also see CSA SA1/1431/1931/1, *The Bells (Regulation) Law*, Limassol Commissioner’s report to the Colonial Secretary, 28 December 1931; and Governor Storrs to Secretary of State Cunliffe-Lister, 30 December 1931.

⁷³ NA, CO 67/267/9, Arthur Dawe’s minute, 9 January 1936.

⁷⁴ The government was particularly suspicious of the links between the Church and the Greek Government, and of the activities of the Greek Consul, Loudovikos Skarpas. Alexis Kyrou, Skarpas’ predecessor and an advocate of enosis, had been deported from the island for his role in the 1931 revolt. The government questioned in particular the connections of the Greek Government with possible candidates for the Archiepiscopal See, who were considered to be advocates of enosis or anti-British, such as the Archbishop of Thyateira Germanos, the grand Archimandrite of London Michael Constantinides and the Bishop of Trebizond Chrysanthos Phillipides. The colonial government also warned against any intervention by foreign Patriarchates, such as the Ecumenical Patriarchate or the Patriarchates of Constantinople and Alexandria, all financially supported by the Greek Government. NA, CO 67/267/9, Governor’s despatch, 17 December 1936; NA, CO 67/276/1, *The Archiepiscopal question*, report of the British Legation in Athens, 31 August 1937; NA, CO 67/274/5, *Political situation: quarterly reports*; NA, CO 67/286/3, *the Archiepiscopal question*, Governor Palmer to Under-Secretary of State, 16 December 1938; NA, CO 67/297/4, *Archiepiscopal question*, A.B. Acheson’s despatch, 20 November 1939.

degree of state intervention in a question lying outside the scope of the administration's jurisdiction, he invoked the '1908 precedent', when, in face of the 1900-1910 archiepiscopal question, the government had intervened through *ad hoc* legislation in order to determine the procedure for the election of an archbishop.⁷⁵ The grounds of this justification were met with scepticism from the Colonial Office, which described the proposed intervention as autocratic, and noted that, in contrast to 1908, the Church of Cyprus now had a constitutional charter, the *Katastatikon*, which had been brought into effect in 1914.⁷⁶

To complicate matters for the British, the Chiefs of Staff were at the time deliberating over a plan to convert Cyprus into a major military base. Though such considerations proved short-lived, they necessitated firm action to suppress the Church's political activities.⁷⁷ Hence, a grand design to reform the Church of Cyprus was conceived. The plan aimed to bring Church under state control, and addressed all pending issues: the archiepiscopal election, the administration of the Church property and the question of episcopal appointments. The reform was ultimately abandoned, because of the 'risk of revivifying an institution ... "bound hand and foot to the chariot of Hellenism and political intrigue"'.⁷⁸

The Cyprus government then favoured the introduction of a set of laws, each of which dealt with a specific feature of the Church of Cyprus. First came the law on the election of the Bishops and the Archbishop – called the 'Berat' Law – according to which elections should be dependent upon formal ratification by the governor to be considered valid.⁷⁹ Second, with a view to deal with the question of ethnarchy, another law was proposed, with the aim to revise the *ex-*

⁷⁵ See *The Cyprus Gazette* (1908), Law No. 8, pp. 6513-6525.

⁷⁶ NA, CO 67/267/9, Permanent Under-Secretary's minute, 29 November 1936. Emphasis in the original. The Holy Synod passed a new Charter in 1929, which, however, was never brought into force. See Varnavas Tzortzatos, *Οι Βασικοί Θεσμοί Διοικήσεως της Αυτοκέφαλου Εκκλησίας της Κύπρου· Μετά Ιστορικής Ανασκοπήσεως* [*The Fundamental Administrative Institutions of the Autocephalous Church of Cyprus; With a Historical Review*] (Athens: Apostolic Editions of the Diaconate of the Church of Greece, 1974).

⁷⁷ NA, CO 67/267/9, Governor Palmer's minute, June or July 1936; Secretary of State Ormsby-Gore to the Governor, 17 December 1936.

⁷⁸ NA, CO 67/276/1, Secretary of State to the Governor, 16 March 1937. Emphasis in the original.

⁷⁹ In the Ottoman administration system, *berats* were edicts of the sultan, through which he granted privileges. In the case of the Orthodox Church, the election of an Archbishop was officially recognized through a *berat*, through which the sultan defined the former's administrative and judicial authority over his *millet*. Although Ottoman Law was still partially applied in Cyprus under the 1927 Cyprus Courts of Justice Order, and despite the fact that the Cyprus Statute Law contained no provisions overriding the Ottoman Law regarding the *berat*, these privileges were never recognized or upheld during British rule.

officio rights of the archbishop, so as to separate the Church from secular and political affairs.⁸⁰ The proposed law also required that the archbishop should be Cypriot. A third law would impose a governmental audit of the properties and finances of the Church, which had been allegedly used to support the claim for enosis.⁸¹ Finally, the British considered amending the 1933 Elementary Education Law so as to recognize the de facto situation of the previous years that saw the mayors act as chairmen of the education committees in place of the exiled bishops. The aim here was to prevent the Church from regaining its former dominant position in the administration of educational affairs.⁸² Overall, the proposed legislation signified an articulate attempt to bring the Church under the control of the colonial state and force it out of politics.

For the Secretary of State, the amendment of the 1933 Education Law was imperative. Both the Church and the colonial authorities considered education to be the major factor for the promotion of the national sentiments of Greek-Cypriots. Memories of Ireland, where the influence of the Catholic Church over matters of education eventually led to the Fenian movement, only strengthened the arguments for a dynamic intervention. As early as 1929, the Assistant Under-Secretary of State stressed:

We shall never have peace in Cyprus, and ... the situation is bound to grow progressively worse, so long as Education is under the control of people who use their power openly for political ends. It will be a case of Ireland over again. What can we expect of a generation which has been inoculated from early childhood with the "Union with Greece" virus? If matters ... go unchecked, we shall reach a point – as we did in Ireland - when we shall have no practical alternative but to yield to the demand.⁸³

Indeed, government attempts to introduce a British atmosphere in education were based on a comparative study of the curricula developed for teachers in Northern Ireland, Palestine and Ceylon.⁸⁴ Ultimately, the 1937 Elementary Education Law, the first of those discussed to be passed by the government, altered the composition of the Board of Education and town

⁸⁰ NA, CO 67/276/1, Governor to the Secretary of State, 4 January 1937.

⁸¹ NA, CO 67/299/3, *Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus: administration of funds*, Governor to the Secretary of State, Malcolm MacDonald, 3 March 1939.

⁸² NA, CO 67/276/1, Secretary of State Ormsby-Gore to the Governor, 16 March 1937. After the 1931 revolt and the deportations of the Bishops of Kition and Kyrenia, who were chairmen of school boards and town committees, their positions were taken by the mayors, who served as vice-chairmen. Moreover, since the death of Archbishop Cyril, the Locum Tenens could not serve on the central board of education for Orthodox-Christian schools, as he had not succeeded to the full functions of archbishop.

⁸³ Cited in Georghallides, 1985, p. 260. Emphasis in the original.

⁸⁴ Heraclidou, 2011, p. 63.

committees for Orthodox-Christian schools, removing the Archbishop of Cyprus, the Bishop and the Mayor of each town from the seats which they had hitherto held *ex officio*.⁸⁵

Meanwhile, after the summer of 1937, the Bishop of Kyrenia had changed his attitude concerning the archiepiscopal election, probably due to an intervention by the Greek Orthodox Church, and had agreed to the appointment of representatives to mediate between himself and the Bishop of Kition.⁸⁶ Reports that the Locum Tenens travelled to Athens, Alexandria and Jerusalem, and that the Bishop of Trebizond – representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Athens – had been appointed as the representative of the Bishop of Kyrenia alerted the colonial authorities.⁸⁷ In August 1937, the Locum Tenens, probably under pressure by his associates and the Consul of Greece, convened a Synod of the three Cypriot Bishops in Jerusalem. They had two objectives: to reach an agreement over the representatives of the exiles, and to make a decision regarding the candidacy of Germanos, the Archbishop of Thyateira, who was serving as the legate of the Ecumenical Patriarch to the archbishopric of the Church of England. The Synod never convened, because the Bishop of Kition refused to participate, and the Bishop of Kyrenia failed to arrive in Jerusalem. Nonetheless, it constituted a first attempt to resolve the archiepiscopal election. A few weeks after the death of the Bishop of Kition in September 1937, the government passed the Churches and Monasteries (Investigation and Audit) Law. The government then received reports that the Bishop of Trebizond had emerged as a compromise candidate between all competing sides, and that he and the bishop of Sinai planned to come to the island with the purpose of convening an electoral Synod.⁸⁸ It was then that the government promulgated the two remaining laws: the Church of Cyprus (Archbishop's Disqualifications) Law, which excluded the three Cypriot Bishops and any non-Cypriot from becoming candidates;⁸⁹ and the Church of Cyprus (Governor's Approval of Archbishop), or 'Berat' Law.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ According to the newspapers *Neos Kypriakos Phylax* and *Embros*, the change of the Bishop of Kyrenia's position was the result of an exchange of views with a prominent official of the Orthodox Church in Athens. NA, CO 67/276/1, extract from *Embros*, 'Bishop Changes His Views on Throne Question', 17 June 1937.

⁸⁷ NA, CO 67/276/1, Governor Palmer's despatches to Secretary of State Ormsby-Gore, 5 August 1937, 13 August 1937 and 6 September 1937.

⁸⁸ NA, CO 67/276/2, *The Archiepiscopal question*, Sir Cosmo Parkinson's minute, 6 October 1937; Governor to the Secretary of State, 29 October 1937; Colonial Office's report 'Visa for Bishop of Trebizond. The Case for Refusal', December 1937; NA, CO 67/285/12, Archbishop of Thyateira Germanos to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cosmo Lang, 5 January 1938; memorandum on the 'political aspect of the Archiepiscopal vacancy in Cyprus', 1938.

⁸⁹ The law prevented the election of deported persons, namely the Bishops of Kyrenia and Kition and that of persons been convicted for sedition, namely the Locum Tenens (see section 2.3).

Religious and Political Discourses and Church Solidarity

For the Church of Cyprus, the archiepiscopal question primarily represented a political matter, as it encapsulated a power struggle within Church circles, and a confrontation with the government and parts of the secular Greek-Cypriot elite. Nonetheless, the Church formulated a theological rationale as well. The Church would deploy this rationale throughout the confrontation with the colonial authorities. At this level, it would find a powerful ally, whose intervention would prove challenging for the government: the Anglican Church.

Just a few days after Archbishop Cyril's death, the Locum Tenens wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury and head of the Anglican Church, Cosmo Lang (1928-1942), reminding him of his leading role in the attempts at improving the relationship between the Orthodox and Anglican Churches, and appealing for his intervention in favour of the return of the Bishops of Kyrenia and Kition.⁹¹ In 1931, after the deportation of the bishops, Lang had expressed his disapproval of their activities and his doubts on whether he should advocate their return. In December 1933, however, he stressed to Secretary of State Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister that similar appeals had been addressed to him by the Patriarch of Alexandria, the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Archbishop of Thyateira.⁹² The Church of England did not consider the British government responsible for the election deadlock, placing the blame on the intransigence of the exiled bishops and the Locum Tenens. Lang was now calling, however, for a compromise solution, to the effect that the Bishops should be allowed to return, on the condition that they would not be candidates, that they would abstain from any political activities during the election and that they would leave the island immediately afterwards.⁹³

⁹⁰ In the same year, the government passed two more laws affecting the Church: the Marriage (Validation and Amendment) Law and the Mejilisses Idaré (District Councils) Amendment Law.

⁹¹ NA, CO 67/252/13, Postal Censor's report to the Colonial Secretary, 22 November 1933.

⁹² CSA, SA1/1431/1931/1, report on article published in *Phoni tis Kyprou* on 19 December 1931.

⁹³ NA, CO 67/285/12, memorandum by the General Secretary of the Church of England Council on Foreign Relations, John Douglas, 1938; NA, CO 67/252/13, Archbishop of Canterbury Cosmo Lang to Secretary of State Cunliffe-Lister, 8 December 1933. This view was held by the Church of England throughout the 1930s. In 1938, Douglas stated that '[H. M. Government] can [not] be blamed for refusing to permit their [the exiled Bishops'] return to the island, as H. M. Government was ... forced to take measures to prevent further active agitation ... since the two bishops not only failed to express contrition for their act of rebellion or to offer guarantees of good behaviour but continued recalcitrant'.

The Archbishop of Thyateira, the Patriarch of Alexandria and the Ecumenical Patriarch were personally known to Lang, the first two having participated in the Seventh Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops in 1930. Meletios, the Patriarch of Alexandria, had been the leader of the Eastern Orthodox delegation sent to the Conference. Meletios had also participated in the Sixth Lambeth Conference, held ten years earlier, which decided on the formation of a permanent Eastern Churches Committee within the Anglican Church. Under his tenure, the Holy Synod of Constantinople had officially acknowledged the validity of the Anglican Orders, its example followed by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Church of Cyprus, then under Cyril.⁹⁴ Meletios had also been the representative of the Patriarch of Jerusalem in Cyprus, was elected Bishop of Kition in 1910, and had participated actively in the formulation of the 1914 charter of the Cyprus Church. His representative to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Germanos, Archbishop of Thyateira, had been deeply involved in the Ecumenical movement of the Anglican Church, leading to a close relationship with Canon John Douglas, General Secretary of the Anglican Church's Council on Foreign Relations. Thanks to these personal connections and a mutual theological consensus, the Anglican Church was the only Western Church with which the Orthodox Church discussed earnestly the possibility of a reunion, creating a substantial concord between Anglican and Greek-Orthodox clergies.⁹⁵

The reaction of the Governor to the Church of Cyprus's appeal to the Archbishop of Canterbury is indicative of the impact the latter would have on the government's position throughout the archiepiscopal question. As Governor Stubbs stressed, any intervention of the Archbishop of Canterbury would be embarrassing to the Cyprus Government, and would delay the resolution of the question.⁹⁶ Similarly, the Permanent Under-Secretary, Sir Cosmo Parkinson emphasized the authority of the Archbishop, and made clear that the Colonial Office would take the views of the Anglican Church under serious consideration.⁹⁷ Interestingly, in contrast to the Anglican authorities in Britain, the Anglican Church in Cyprus decided from early on to align itself fully with the government, stressing that 'the situation is so complicated and so wrapped

⁹⁴ Rappas, 2008, pp. 274-275.

⁹⁵ See also Tatiana Sosiola, 'Sketch of Anglican-Orthodox Dialogues in the Nineteenth Century', in Jonathan Sutton and William Van Den Bercken (eds.), *Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Europe* (Leuven and Paris: Dudley Peeters, 2003), pp. 517-530.

⁹⁶ NA, CO 67/252/13, Governor's despatch, 24 November 1933.

⁹⁷ NA, CO 67/297/4, Permanent Under-Secretary of State Sir Cosmo Parkinson to Governor Palmer, 14 February 1939.

with politics that it is considered inadvisable ... to have any official dealings with the responsible Orthodox authorities'.⁹⁸

A few weeks after the passing of the 1937 laws, the Locum Tenens sent a memorandum to Governor Palmer, Secretary of State William Ormsby-Gore and the press asking for the repeal of the laws regulating the archiepiscopal election.⁹⁹ It is remarkable that the Locum Tenens did not discuss, let alone ask for, the repeal of the Churches and Monasteries (Investigation and Audit) Law and the Education Law, which had been passed during exactly the same period. Neither did he request that any other law that concerned the Church be repealed. The Locum Tenens seems to have considered the use of a theological discourse advantageous for his line of argument, and the invocation of canon law was frequently employed in his text. Thus, a criticism of the provisions of laws that dealt exclusively with secular matters was left for a more appropriate moment in the future. Given that the Archbishop of Canterbury had expressed his favour towards the Investigation and Audit Bill two months earlier, the laws addressing the archiepiscopal election were seen by the Locum Tenens as the weak spot in the colonial government's legal case.¹⁰⁰

The central argument of the Locum Tenens was that the government's intervention violated 'perennial [προαιώνια] rights, the perennial [αιωνόβιον] status quo [καθεστώς] and the most ancient [παλαιόφατο] autonomy' of the Church of Cyprus. In particular, he argued that the Archbishop's Disqualifications Law violated the sacred canons of the Orthodox Christian faith, the true spirit of Christianity, the rights of the Church (the only competent authority to define any qualifications of the clergy) and canons instituted by the Apostles and Ecumenical Synods and the Charter of the Church of Cyprus. Most importantly, the Governor's approval of the Archbishop Law violated the 'divine inspiration' of the electors, who made their decision 'by the right of God [ελέω Θεού], by the grace of Christ [χάρτι Χριστού] and in the presence of the Holy Spirit [εν Πνεύματι Αγίω]'.

⁹⁸ Cited in Tabitha Morgan, *Sweet and bitter island; a history of the British in Cyprus* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 138.

⁹⁹ NA, CO 67/285/12, memorandum on the 'political aspect of the Archiepiscopal vacancy in Cyprus', 1938; Locum Tenens' memorandum to the Governor and the Secretary of State, 21 December 1937.

¹⁰⁰ NA, FCO 141/4259, *position of the Greek Orthodox Church in Cyprus and question of election of an Archbishop*, Archbishop of Canterbury to the Secretary of State, 23 September 1937.

Ultimately, the matter of the invocation of the Holy Spirit became a point of contestation for all clerics involved. The Bishop of Trebizond stressed that the election was a religious act, the selection and the enthronement of the candidate immediately following the invocation of the Holy Spirit. According to Church tradition, the two acts were parts of the same and indivisible process, between which no temporal authority had the right to intervene.¹⁰¹ The same rationale was employed by Archbishop Germanos and the Archbishop of Canterbury, who also requested that the Secretary of State prevail upon the Governor to modify his position. Moreover, the Anglican Archbishop argued that the interests of the government would be sufficiently safeguarded if provision was made that the Governor would receive a list of candidates *before* the election and strike out the persons to whom he had valid objections.¹⁰² He also expressed his concerns about the Archbishop's Disqualification Law, reaffirmed his consent to the exclusion of the two deported bishops and the Locum Tenens from the process and stressed the importance of an immediate resolution to the archiepiscopal election. The anticipated pro-Synod of all the Orthodox Churches would debate the normalization of relations between the Anglican and Orthodox Churches, and Lang did not want Cyprus to feature in that discussion.¹⁰³ Overall, religious solidarity resulted in a divergence between the agendas of these two institutions, the Anglican Church and the colonial administration. The dissociation between the colonial and the Church authorities illustrated the inherent tensions between a secular, autocratic discourse, made manifest through Common Law, and a sacred rationale, based on Church canon and ecclesiastic traditions.

The secular Greek-Cypriot elite adopted a less confrontational attitude towards the colonial government; it remained critical of the legislative initiatives, but did not denounce them on the whole.¹⁰⁴ In November 1937, the newspaper *Embros* [*Forward*] stated that the

¹⁰¹ NA, CO 67/285/12, Bishop of Trebizond's memorandum, 6 January 1938.

¹⁰² Ibid., Archbishop of Thyateira to the Archbishop of Canterbury, 5 January 1938; Archbishop of Canterbury to the Secretary of State, 28 January 1938.

¹⁰³ NA, CO 67 286/1, *the Archiepiscopal question*, Archbishop of Canterbury to the Secretary of State, 29 April 1938.

¹⁰⁴ Notably, one of the most vocal supporters of the government's legislative initiative against the Church was Parthenios Kirmitsis, preacher of the Archbishopric and professor of Theology at the Pan-Cypriot Gymnasium. In his letter to the Commissioner of Nicosia, Kirmitsis asked the government to support him for the Archiepiscopal See, in exchange for his absolute loyalty. Kirmitsis stressed that he did not support the 'national movement' in the Church. He also claimed that his candidacy would be well supported by the clergy and the laity, as he was a nephew of both the Archbishop Cyril and the Bishop of Kition, and due to the fact that his strong connections in the colonial government had been kept secret. NA, CO 67/276/3, *The Archiepiscopal question*, Kirmitsis' letter to the Governor,

government had cause to block the candidacy of individuals whose claim to spiritual leadership was not accompanied by the attitude of loyal citizenship. The newspaper urged both sides to compromise, and further warned the Governor that the ever-tightening legislative measures risked alienating Greek-Cypriots from the government.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, members of the Advisory Council stressed their consent to the exclusion of the Cypriot Bishops from the election, but expressed doubts on limiting the candidacies to Cypriot natives.¹⁰⁶ The attitude of the secular elite echoed its ongoing antagonism towards the Church regarding the management of its finances and property. In this context, support for the government's legislative intervention was dictated by the need to restrict the Church's economic and political power. The passing of the Churches and Monasteries (Investigation and Audit) Law constituted a major success for the secular elite, which saw that the demands it put forward from the beginning of colonial rule and more recently during 1933-34 now lay within their grasp.

The varying reactions of Orthodox prelates to the 1937 legislation are indicative of the political significance of the archiepiscopal question, which remained unresolved. The activity of the Patriarch of Alexandria is a case in point. In 1937, when the colonial authorities introduced their new legislative measures, the Patriarch had reacted with hostile indifference. A year later, he changed his position, motivated by his personal aspirations, and asked for a British stipend to pledge his services at the disposal of the British Government.¹⁰⁷ In October 1939, in opposition to the established position of the Church of Cyprus, the Church of Greece and most other Orthodox Churches, the Patriarch stated that the laws were not anti-canonical, and argued that the government was obliged to enforce them because, by contrast with the allegations of the Bishop of Kyrenia, it was the only responsible solution for defining the preconditions for the archiepiscopal election.¹⁰⁸

In this context of shifting alliances and intrigue, the Anglican Church, a powerful institution with great and direct influence on colonial authorities, emerged as the most valuable

15 December 1937; NA, FCO 141/2565, *Cyprus: Archiepiscopal vacancy; comments on legislation*, Nicosia Commissioner to the Colonial Secretary, 22 December 1937.

¹⁰⁵ NA, FCO 141/2565, copy of article published in *Embros*, 18 November 1937; copy of editor of *Embros*' despatch, November 1937.

¹⁰⁶ NA, FCO 141/2565, R. Kythreotis, member of the Advisory Council, to the Governor, 22 November 1937.

¹⁰⁷ NA, FCO 141/2565, despatch by the British Consul-General in Alexandria to the Governor, 24 January 1938; NA, CO 67/286/3, Governor to the Under-Secretary of State, 16 December 1938.

¹⁰⁸ NA, CO 67/297/4, extract from Achilleas Christodoulides' letter to the Locum Tenens, 3 October 1939.

ally of the Church of Cyprus. From a very early stage, the intervention of the Anglican Church – 26 of whose bishops sat in the House of Lords – had cast doubt upon the Colonial Office concerning the way the government of Cyprus had managed the entire question. In April 1938, Secretary of State Ormsby-Gore noted:

It is all most unsatisfactory... I feel that ... [the governor] ignores ... the fact that we have a Bench of Bishops in the House of Lords and is determined to embarrass the secretary of state. I feel I have no option but to pass these drafts and hope that the governor will not go on ignoring my views. It is most unsatisfactory.¹⁰⁹

Although the Archbishop of Canterbury did not harbour the same aversion to the 1937 laws held by the Church of Cyprus, he exerted pressure on the Secretary of State to compromise with the Church, repeal the Berat law, and replace it with a provision for a list of candidates to be approved by the Governor before the election. The British proposal, however, was rejected by the Locum Tenens.¹¹⁰ Nonetheless, the Colonial Office was forced to delay the enactment of the laws on the archiepiscopal election for almost a year.¹¹¹ Most importantly, a set of laws drafted in early 1939, which would place further restrictions on the autonomy of Church by forcing an archiepiscopal election, were never adopted. In the following years, the Church of England continued its policy of involvement in the matter, to the dismay of the colonial authorities. The Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem, George Francis Graham-Brown, visited Cyprus some months later in mid-1939, and met with the Locum Tenens, to the Cyprus Government's and the Colonial Office's irritation. In spring 1940, the Bishops of Gloucester and Gibraltar called on the British Ambassador in Athens, pleading that any future legislation respect the charter of the Church of Cyprus.¹¹² The intervention of the Anglican Church would prove even more effective after the end of the Second World War. In 1946, the laws would be repealed in line with the colonial government's new considerations on Cypriot politics.

¹⁰⁹ NA, CO 67/285/12, Secretary of State's minute, 23 April 1938. Emphasis in the original.

¹¹⁰ NA, CO 67/286/2, *Cyprus, Original Correspondence. The Archiepiscopal question*, report on the Archbishopric of Cyprus, August or September 1938. Locum Tenens' memorandum to the Colonial Secretary, 6 August 1938.

¹¹¹ NA, CO 67/297/4, J. Bennett's minute, 14 January 1939.

¹¹² 'Interview of the Locum Tenens with the Anglican Bishop on Jerusalem about the Cyprus Archiepiscopal Question', *Apostolos Varnavas* 1 (February 1940), 101-106; NA, CO 67/307/8, *Archiepiscopal question*, Governor's despatch, 9 February 1940, transmitting Colonial Secretary's minutes of meeting between the Locum Tenens and Bishop Graham-Brown; British Ambassador to Foreign Secretary, 25 May 1940.

2.3 Colonial Legality vs. Ethnarchy

The confrontation between the Church and the colonial authorities culminated in 1939, when the government brought charges against the Locum Tenens, leading to his conviction. As early as 1932, Leontios, then Bishop of Paphos, had been convicted for sedition by the Limassol Assize Court, because of his public criticism of those who had testified against Greek-Cypriots in the aftermath of the 1931 revolt.¹¹³ In April 1938, the Locum Tenens was again prosecuted for delivering seditious speeches, and was found guilty of seeking to disturb the tranquillity of the colony. He was placed under police supervision for one year, ordered to reside in the municipal limits of Paphos, and forbidden to leave the district without written authority of the police, under the 1935 Prevention of Crime Law.¹¹⁴ Exactly a year later, in April 1939, based on information given by an informant, a party of 14 policemen raided the Archbishopric looking for guns and seditious documents.¹¹⁵ This raid, which took place on Orthodox Easter Monday, as well as the fact that the priests were body-searched and the sacristy opened, caused an outcry. The Locum Tenens protested to the Governor that the search at the Archbishopric was not only a violation of the immunity of the Church (thus, an impious act), but also contrary to the promise given by the first British High Commissioner back in 1878 that the government would respect the rights of the Church.¹¹⁶ The Locum Tenens forwarded his complaints to the Secretary of State, and sent letters to the Ecumenical Patriarch, the Patriarchs of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, Romania and Serbia, the Archbishop of Athens, the heads of the Autocephalous Churches of Georgia, Albania and Poland and, of course, the Archbishop of Canterbury.¹¹⁷ The raid on the Archbishopric was

¹¹³ *Eleftheria*, 'The Metropolitan of Paphos before the Limassol Assize Court is accused that he delivered various seditious speeches', 16 November 1932; NA CO 67/297/7, *Proceedings against the Locum Tenens of the Archiepiscopal See under the Prevention of Crime Law*, Deputy Commissioner of Police to the Commissioner of Police, 18 May 1939.

¹¹⁴ NA, CO 67/285/12, Secretary of State to the Archbishop of Canterbury, 25 April 1938; A.B. Acheson to the Under-Secretary of State, 26 April 1938; NA, CO 67/297/7, Colonial Office minute, 10 June 1939.

¹¹⁵ Andreas Tillyrides, *Cyprus 1931-1947: The outcome of the uprising and the long vacancy of the Archiepiscopal Throne*, (Reprint by the Theological Yearbook of the Archbishopric of Thyateira and Great Britain, *Church and Theology*, III, 1982), 700-701.

¹¹⁶ NA, CO 67/297/6, *Police search of the archbishopric at Nicosia*, Locum Tenens' memorandum to the Governor and the Secretary of State, 1 May 1939.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Locum Tenens' telegram to the Archbishop of Canterbury, 27 April 1939; *Phoni tis Kyprou*, 'A Protest of the Locum Tenens to the Governor and the Secretary of State', 6 May 1939.

intensely criticized by the Colonial Office, as it brought only negligible results, while eliciting severe criticism from the Anglican Archbishop and considerable local reaction.¹¹⁸

A few weeks later in May 1939, the Locum Tenens was summoned to the District Court of Limassol for what was to turn into a three-day trial (15-17 May) that would again lead to his conviction.¹¹⁹ Leontios' alleged subversive activity from mid-1938 to mid-1939 led to accusations of disturbance of the peace in the colony, and actions against British sovereignty over the island. Leontios was further accused of corrupting the minds of schoolboys, claiming to represent the Cypriot people and delivering sermons and speeches of political nature – that is, claiming ethnarchy.¹²⁰ What is of particular interest is that these accusations did not take the form of charges against the Locum Tenens, but constituted grounds for determining the 'general circumstances' of the case, and for proving his 'known character' and the 'likelihood of disturbing the public tranquillity' to the Court.¹²¹ The 1935 Prevention of Crime Law, under which Leontios was convicted, allowed the police to summon and then arrest an individual deemed likely to breach the peace, without the obligation to prove that they were guilty of any particular act that showed such an intent.¹²² As the president of the Court, Justice Thomas Wilkinson, noted at the opening of the trial, 'there could be no strict evidence that a person is likely to do something. What is likely to happen must be a matter of opinion'.¹²³ On the final day of the trial, explaining his argumentation for making an order, he stated:

I do not have to decide, and I do not decide, whether the Respondent has committed any offence. The [Prevention of Crime] Law ... is not penal, ... it is ... preventive: what I have to decide is whether or not an Order is to be made – and one of the considerations I have to bear in mind is, the likelihood ... of any disturbance of the public tranquillity – NOT whether any such disturbance has

¹¹⁸ NA, CO 67/297/6, Colonial Office officials' minutes, 1, 8 and 18 May 1939. The meagre findings of the police consisted in most part of documents dating from before 1931. These were mostly missives from various Church figures of the period, generally supportive of enosis, and parts of the archive of the National Organization of Cyprus, and the Pan-Cypriot Union of National Youth. The few exceptions from 1938-1939 included instructions issued by the Locum Tenens enjoining mourning on account of the persecution of the Church of Cyprus, forbidding a thanksgiving service on the occasion of the King's Birthday; and of a sermon delivered on the occasion of Greek Independence Day, a national holiday that expressed support for enosis. Ibid., Press Officer to the Colonial Secretary, 21 April 1939.

¹¹⁹ NA, FCO 141/2590, *Court proceedings against Archiepiscopal Locum Tenens*, Court proceedings, 15-17 May, 1939; *Phoni tis Kyprou*, 'The judgment of the case of the Locum Tenens before the Limassol court', 20 May 1939.

¹²⁰ NA, FCO 141/2590, opening speech by the Deputy Commissioner of Police, 15 May 1939; president of the Court's reasoning of the decision, 17 May 1939.

¹²¹ Ibid., president of the Court's Order, 17 May 1939

¹²² *The Cyprus Gazette*, 1935, Law No. 30, pp. 617-621, sections 2, 3 and 5(4b).

¹²³ NA, FCO 141/2590, Court's statement in the beginning of the trial, 15 May 1939.

taken place. I have to look to what may happen in the future than make any ruling as to what has happened in the past.¹²⁴

Before stressing some important features of the trial, an analysis of the 1935 Prevention of Crime Law, in the context of the legal and institutional system of Cyprus and the British colonial empire in general, is necessary.

The official argumentation behind the enactment of the law was the need to reduce crimes against property in the countryside – notably the theft of animals and crops, which the police, the district administration and the rural constabulary were unable to control.¹²⁵ In September 1934, a member of the Advisory Council sent a letter to the Colonial Secretary, blaming the increase in crime to the fact that police had stopped arresting suspects.¹²⁶ A few days later, the *mukhtars* and *azas* (members of village councils) of 36 villages in the district of Larnaca petitioned the government, requesting that those convicted of theft should be flogged and imprisoned, and that landless vagabonds known to the authorities be pre-emptively arrested. The introduction of a law for the Prevention of Crime along these demands was discussed at a meeting of the Advisory Council the following month. The Council warmly supported such measures. Meanwhile, the Commissioner of Larnaca and the Governor suggested the amendment of the Penal Code so that cases of animal stealing and robbery were punishable by flogging, in addition to imprisonment.¹²⁷

Although the official rationale for the enactment of the Prevention of Crime Law was the need to prevent criminal actions, it appears that the repression of political activity was equally important in the final decision of the government. The Commissioner of Larnaca, the first official to propose the enactment of the law, argued that it would allow the government to control subversive activity and restrict the freedom of movement of suspect individuals. In fact, the law was introduced because the emergency Defence Regulations that had been enacted after the 1931 revolt to prevent political agitation would have to be eventually repealed. The debate

¹²⁴ Ibid., president of the Court's reasoning of the decision, emphasis in the original.

¹²⁵ NA, CO 67/261/8, *Prevention of Crime Law, 1935*, Commissioner of Larnaca's memorandum to the Colonial Secretary, 21 September 1934; Attorney General's legal report, 2 November 1935; Minutes of Arthur Dawe, Colonial Office official, 18/4 and 13 May 1935.

¹²⁶ Ibid., George Vassiliades, member of the Advisory Council, to the Colonial Secretary, 1 September 1934.

¹²⁷ Ibid., Governor to the Secretary of State, Cunliffe-Lister, 20 March 1935.

that accompanied the amendment of the law in 1951, as well as the relevant discussions for the introduction of the new Peace and Order (Preservation) Law, make clear that the goal of the authorities was to repress ‘the expression of political opinions’ by criminalizing ‘utterances, publications or conduct ... likely to disturb public tranquillity or ... prejudicial to good government’.¹²⁸ The law seems to have been modelled on the Palestine Prevention of Crime Ordinance of 1933, which had amended a 1929 Ordinance for the Prevention of Crime, and shared a similar objective with the Cypriot legislation.¹²⁹ The most controversial provision of the Palestine Law was the barring of the public and representatives of the Press from judicial proceedings under the Ordinance, which indicated that the expected trials would not deal solely with ordinary civil crime.¹³⁰ The repressive character of the law was made clearly manifest in the trial of the Locum Tenens, four years after its enactment.

According to the provisions of the Cyprus 1935 Prevention of Crime Law, a commissioner or a president of a district court could act against an individual, upon information that they were likely to disturb the peace. The accused was required to prove that their intentions were peaceful, or the judge could order that the person post bond or be restrained within the limits of a district, town or village. Moreover, the law stated that the prosecution was not required to prove that a person committed any particular act in court, or even intent of purpose. A case could be made simply based on circumstantial evidence or even the ‘known character’ of the accused.

On a first level, the law introduced the criminalization of intent. As stated in sections 2 and 5(4b), it was not the criminal act itself that was prosecuted, but the likelihood of its being committed. Although similar provisions had been introduced into the United Kingdom’s legal

¹²⁸ *The Cyprus Gazette*, 1951, law No. 9, pp. 39-43, section 3. Most notably, the Law repealed the provision for an appeal to be made to the Governor on an order made by a Commissioner. As an official of the Colonial Office put it, what the Governor sought with the passing of the Law was to repress the expression of political opinions, especially by prominent political and ecclesiastical figures. Acts such as the enosis plebiscite, organized by the Church exactly a year before the Law was passed, and subsequent demonstrations were seen as humiliating by the government and thus needed to be restrained. See NA, CO 537/6231, *Prevention of Crime Law, 1953: amendment*, Attorney General’s notes on the draft of the law, 11 January 1950; Colonial Office officials’ minutes on the draft, 13 January 1950, 6 and 8 March 1950; Governor Sir Andrew Barkworth Wright’s telegrams to Secretary of State Jim Griffiths, 1 March and 17 April 1950.

¹²⁹ NA, CO 67/266/7, *Operation of the Prevention of Crime Law, 1935*, copy of the Palestine Prevention of Crime Ordinance No. 48 of 1933.

¹³⁰ NA, CO 733/209/17, *Prevention of Crime Ordinances for 1920, 1926 (Amendment) and 1929*, Palestine Colonial Secretary’s despatch, 17 October 1931; Colonial Office official’s minute, 26 September 1931.

system as early as 1871, and its logic had been partially maintained in the 1908 Prevention of Crime Act, the political dimensions of their application in Cyprus institutionalized the suppression of freedom of expression, especially in relation to nationalist and anti-colonial positions.¹³¹ On a second level, the provisions concerning the evidence that would determine the guilt or innocence of the accused were clearly arbitrary. The ‘circumstances of the case’ and the ‘known character’ of the accused were seen as sufficient for a person’s conviction, and were at the absolute discretion of the Court. Although similar provision had been present in the 1824 Vagrancy Act, the 1871 Prevention of Crimes Act, and the 1908 Prevention of Crime Act, in Cyprus, the law also provided the Governor and commissioners with the ability to exercise judicial powers. And taking into consideration the pro-rogation of the Legislative Council after the 1931 revolt and the permanent ability of the government to legislate with Orders in Council, the law represented the final blow for the separation of powers on the island.

This feature made the law all the more advantageous in the eyes of the government and the Colonial Office. Similar legislation had existed in other colonies and dependencies, such as Palestine, Kenya, Ireland and the Channel Islands.¹³² As Governor Palmer stated,

[T]he Law ... has been enacted as an exceptional measure in terrorem maleficorum and for the preservation of the security of the law-abiding citizen. By associating members of the Administration and judicial officers in a common procedure for its application, it serves to impress upon the public mind the fact, sometimes liable to be obscured, that Administration and Judiciary are both equally and alike functions of the same Government and inspired by a single purpose to maintain the ‘King’s Peace’.¹³³

Such an utilitarian approach to the legal system was seen as natural by all ranks of the colonial administration. Commenting on the law, district commissioners and colonial office officials admitted that its restricting provisions were oppressive and illiberal. Yet, as Arthur Dawe, a

¹³¹ Section 15 of the 1871 Prevention of Crimes Act and section 10 of the 1908 Law, which replaced it, provided that reputation, character and circumstances were to be considered as evidence in a criminal trial.

¹³² In Ireland, the 1882 Prevention of Crime Act provided the Lord Lieutenant with the power to prohibit meetings and to order searches for documents. As the Chief Secretary for Ireland stated, commenting on the Law, its objective was to prevent political crimes and meetings as well as control subversive speakers and publications, even when an immediate breach of the peace was not expected. In the Channel Islands, the 1908 Prevention of Crimes Act provided that a dishonest or criminal life was admissible as evidence. Similar legislation was enacted in Kenya. See NA, CAB 37/14/20, *Prevention of Crime (Ireland) Act, 1882*, comments on legislation; NA, CAB 37/14/21, memorandum by the Chief Secretary for Ireland, 13 April 1885; NA, CO 67/261/8, Colonial Office official’s minute, 10 May 1935.

¹³³ NA, CO 67/266/7, Governor to Secretary of State James Henry Thomas, 3 January 1936. Emphases in the original. The Latin legal term ‘in terrorem maleficorum’ means ‘[in order] to frighten the wicked’.

senior official in London, stressed, such legislation might be reasonably applied in Cyprus, given that it had worked well in Palestine.¹³⁴ He further stated:

[O]bjections to this type of legislation from the standpoint of British legal principles are obvious. But principles which will work here will not equally work in the special conditions of Cyprus... [W]e must let the Governor have his way. He is evidently quite conscious of the unusual nature of the provisions... But he is satisfied that no less drastic powers are necessary.¹³⁵

As had been expected, the Prevention of Crime Law was welcomed not only by the village authorities, who had called for its introduction, but also by part of the rural population, which, in contrast to the townsfolk, suffered from petty crimes on a constant basis. From the Shepherds' Licensing Law to the Goats (Amendment) Law, and from the Juvenile Offenders Law to the Prevention of Crime Law, the colonial authorities introduced a series of legislative initiatives in 1935 against rural crime. Along with the reorganization of the police and the intensification of patrols in the countryside, the number of minor offences in rural areas dropped during the first half of 1936. *Mukhtars*, *azas* and rural constables expressed their satisfaction with the deterrent effect of the law, as well as its ability to decrease the cases of animal-stealing, housebreaking and burglary. This led the Governor to note with satisfaction that the law was not perceived as arbitrary and extra-judicial by the rural population.¹³⁶

In 1939, the trial of the Locum Tenens would test the effectiveness of the law in handling political questions. Most importantly, the trial illustrated the significant role of the Church in Cypriot politics, with Leontios personifying the conflict against the colonial authorities. His defence consisted of ten advocates from all across Cyprus, all of them important individuals within the Greek-Cypriot community and prominent in the struggle against the colonial government.¹³⁷ The team included Criton Tornaritis, Alekos Zenon, Lefkios Zenon and Pheidias Kyriakides from Limassol; Vias Markides from Nicosia; Christodoulos Galatopoulos and Sotiris Markides from Paphos; George Vassiliades from Larnaca; Andreas Gavrielides from

¹³⁴ NA, CO 67/261/8, Dawe's, minute, 18 April 1935.

¹³⁵ Ibid., Dawe's minute, 13 May 1935.

¹³⁶ NA, CO 67/266/7, Chief Commandant of Police to the Colonial Secretary, 5 August 1936; Acting Governor to the Secretary of State, 14 August 1936.

¹³⁷ Information on the defence team and its argumentation was taken from NA, CO 67/297/7, Deputy Commissioner of Police to the Commissioner of Police, 18 May 1939; and FCO 141/2590, Court proceedings, 15-17 May 1939. Also see Rappas, 2008, pp. 290-291.

Famagusta; and Savvas Christis from Kyrenia. In other words, the defence represented different generations and cut across political divisions within the Greek-Cypriot community. Some, like Gavrielides and Lefkios Zenon, both members of EREK, were ardent nationalists. Alekos Zenon and Sotiris Markides had fought in the Balkan Wars as volunteers with the Greek army, while Kyriakides had been one of the leaders of the demonstration that attacked the government house in 1931. Others were affiliated to the Left, such as Kyriakides and Vassiliades, who would become founding members of AKEL in April 1941, and Galatopoulos, who had been elected deputy at the legislative council with communist support and was later imprisoned for his role in the revolt.

It is of particular interest that the defence team did not attempt to persuade the Court that the various speeches and sermons of the Locum Tenens – which constituted the main body of evidence offered by the prosecution – were innocuous and unthreatening. No attempt was made to reject the accusations, apart from that of promoting anti-British feelings. Throughout the cross-examination of the witnesses and in their addresses to the Court, the advocates focused on the historically Greek character of Cyprus and on Leontios' ethnarchic role. According to the defence, these points made the actions and discourse of the Locum Tenens natural, if not imperative. Even during cross-examination, the advocates attempted to highlight the links with Greek culture that the witnesses enjoyed. The defence argued that the dedication of Leontios to his ethnarchic duties, that is, the promotion of Greek culture and Orthodox faith, was not incompatible with loyalty to the British. It seems that the growing tensions in Europe and especially in the Eastern Mediterranean had caused concerns among Greek-Cypriots that a potential departure of Britain from the island could only pave the way for the occupation of Cyprus from a different foreign power.

In his own statement, the Locum Tenens defined himself as the ethnarch of the Greek-Cypriot community, the defender of its holy and national traditions and the promoter of Greek education [παιδεία].¹³⁸ Like his defence team, Leontios professed his loyalty to Great Britain, and, at the same time, his readiness to sacrifice himself for the sake of his congregation. At the

¹³⁸ NA, FCO 141/2590, Locum Tenens' speech, 17 May 1939. The Greek term 'παιδεία' designates a system of broad cultural education, or a process providing systematic knowledge for the overall improvement of someone's intellectual level. 'Εκπαίδευση' (education), on the other hand, designates a systematic process of transmitting knowledge and skills on a more narrow, or specific basis.

same time, he invoked his spiritual role, refusing to take the oath and speak from the dock, while he employed a number of Biblical extracts in his address. His whole presentation seems to have been carefully prepared. When Leontios arrived at court on the first day of the trial, he was accompanied by 200 clerics and a clique of supporters.¹³⁹ During the course of Leontios' address to the court, many in the audience - and at least four of the advocates - wept. Men, women and children gathered every day in the vicinity of the courthouse, and as the proceedings lengthened the crowds became larger. According to the report of the Deputy Commissioner of Police:

On every appearance of the Bishop and his attendant priests in the streets long cheering and ... clapping was heard... One school in the vicinity of the Bishopric ... broke out of class and rushed on to the street to applaud the Bishop on his way to Court. The Bishop responded to the applause on all occasions by waving his hand and blessing the people... Occasionally cries of "Zito Enosis" [Long Live Enosis] ... were heard in the crowd. Large crowds gathered outside the Limassol Metropolis after the Bishop had returned there following the decision of the Court ... and remained there until his departure at Paphos.¹⁴⁰

The trial had offered Leontios a great opportunity to restore the prestige of the Church, which had been greatly diminished by the archiepiscopal question and the issue of Church property. As such, the objective of the Locum Tenens and his defence team was not to secure acquittal, but to attach a political significance to the trial that would confirm the claim of the Church to ethnarchy. Indeed, the trial highlighted the political unity of the Greek-Cypriot community, under an emerging leader who could convincingly appear as the defender of its national interests. The Locum Tenens' persecution would, it was hoped, come to be inscribed as a symbolic sacrifice for the good of his congregation. In this sense, the trial developed into an absolute success for Leontios and a failure for the government. The British had only managed to restrict his physical movement within the municipal limits of Paphos, at the cost of enhancing his prestige. They would repeat the same mistake in 1956, with the exile of Archbishop Makarios III.

Most importantly, all sides involved in the trial (the colonial authorities, the Church, the secular Greek-Cypriot elite) regarded the process as a challenge to the political role of the Church. Because the accusations revolved around the political and secular, or ethnarchic, dimension of Leontios' activities, the British implicitly recognized the Church itself as a partially

¹³⁹ NA, CO 67/297/7, Limassol and Paphos Deputy Commissioner to the Commissioner, 18 May 1939.

¹⁴⁰ NA, CO 67/297/7, Deputy Commissioner of Police to the Commissioner of Police, 18 May 1939.

secular institution. The accusations, as well as the argumentation provided by the public prosecution and the Court, did not address the religious and spiritual authority of the accused. The British had seized an opportunity to further curtail the secular activity of the Church, after the successful measures against religious participation in the Greek-Cypriot board of education and its local branches. The Court was mainly preoccupied with the content of Church discourse, not the presence of such activity – after all, the Muslim religious elite had also traditionally enjoyed a longstanding secular role, which the government sought to reinforce. Conversely, the trial offered the Church an opportunity to secure its prominent political position on the island. The confrontation between the Church and the government urged all Greek-Cypriot political forces to support the Locum Tenens, creating a consensus among the previously competing factions. That new understanding was made manifest in the composition of the defence team and the extensive coverage of the trial in most newspapers of the island, including those controlled by the secular elite and the left-wing *Anexartitos* (*The Independent*). In the following years, Leontios would successfully expand on his position as a prominent anti-government political figure and leader of the Greek-Cypriot community.

2.4 Towards the Nationalization of Greek-Cypriot Politics

The relations between the Church and the government did not improve after the departure of Governor Palmer and the appointment of William Battershill in July 1939. Leontios, who had not been invited to the welcoming ceremony for the new Governor, welcomed Battershill with a protest letter. The Bishop demanded the fulfilment of Greek-Cypriot community's 'national desires', which included the repeal of the 1937 Church laws, the return of the exiled Bishop of Kyrenia and the restoration of Greek-Cypriot education to its original status.¹⁴¹ With the beginning of the Second World War, the Locum Tenens' attitude towards the British hardened further. Leontios refused to allow prayers for an Allied victory, noting that a German victory was probable, while, in early November, he declared that the King, not being an Orthodox believer,

¹⁴¹ Heraclidou, 2011, p. 100.

should not be mentioned in the prayers of Orthodox churches.¹⁴² Moreover, he refused to countenance the collection of charity donations for the British Red Cross in the churches, while he permitted such contributions to the Greek Red Cross.

The entry of Greece into the war on 28 October 1940, however, led to a rapprochement between Leontios and the British. The Bishop stated that all differences between himself and the government were over and that ‘the world is nothing without Britain and Greece’.¹⁴³ On 29 October, Leontios gave a public speech in Larnaca, inviting the audience to forget past misunderstandings, and finishing by proclaiming ‘Long live the King of England, the British nation, our allies Turkey and Greece’.¹⁴⁴ On another occasion, the Bishop draped himself in the British and the Greek flags and proclaimed, in the old pun, that ‘the English are angels’.¹⁴⁵ In the same period, he called for the enrolment of Cypriots in the Greek army, and led popular pro-Greek demonstrations, which were held in all major towns and were tolerated by the British despite the 1930s repressive legislation.¹⁴⁶ As the government feared, Greece’s entry in the war had galvanized pro-Greek, and thus pro-enosis, feelings on the island, as indicated also by the remarkable contribution of Greek-Cypriots to the Greek War Fund.¹⁴⁷ Overall, the Locum Tenens continued to stress his ethnarchic role and the desires of Greek-Cypriots for enosis both in public and in his correspondence with colonial officials.¹⁴⁸ Leontios’ campaign only slowed down after the occupation of Greece by the German army dealt a blow to the prospects of enosis.

While the confrontation between the Church and the government had reached a stalemate, the appearance of a new party would gradually bring about major transformations in the Greek-Cypriot political landscape. In the early 1940s, the KKK moved to form a new, legal left-wing party that would demand labour and civil rights and the end of colonial rule on the

¹⁴² NA, CO 67/313/8, *Archiepiscopal question*, memorandum on Cyprus Archbishopric, 28 March 1941; NA, CO 67/308/9, *Reports on the political situation*, Governor William Battershill to Secretary of State Malcolm MacDonald, 29 December 1939.

¹⁴³ Yiangou, 2012, p.44.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

¹⁴⁵ NA, CO 67/313/8, memorandum on Cyprus Archbishopric, 28 March 1941.

¹⁴⁶ In the first days after the announcement, around 1200 men registered for enrolment in the Greek army and 200 women volunteered for the Greek Red Cross. The volunteer movement was opposed by the colonial government, which was embarrassed at the failure of the recruitment drive for the British forces, and eventually halted by Leontios. *Apostolos Varnavas*, Locum Tenens’ circular ‘On fundraising for the national struggle in memoriam of Ioannis Metaxas’, 31 January 1941; Yiangou, 2012, pp. 47-50.

¹⁴⁷ By mid-1941, the amount raised for the Fund had reached the sum of £100,000. NA, CO 67/308/10, *Reports on the political situation*, Governor to Secretary of State Lord Lloyd, 8 July 1940; Yiangou, 2012, p. 44.

¹⁴⁸ See NA, CO 67/313/11, *Method of dealing with messages of greeting from the Locum Tenens*.

island. The foundation of the Progressive Party of the Working People (AKEL) in April 1941 signified the formation of a broad secular political space, posing a threat to the traditional political establishment. Being particularly active in trade union organizing, the new party played a key role in supporting large-scale labour mobilizations throughout the 1940s. AKEL's political agenda was met with wide popular support, as indicated by its success in the municipal elections of the period, and the party soon emerged as the most significant opponent of the nationalist Greek-Cypriot elite. Four years after its foundation, the party had come to be seen as the most powerful adversary of the colonial government as well, which sought to restrict its activities and stem its appeal.

A few days after the party's foundation, the Locum Tenens established a six-member Λαϊκό Συμβούλιο [Popular Council], composed of nationalist figures from all districts of the island.¹⁴⁹ As early as April 1942, Governor Woolley suggested the deportation of Ploutis Servas, the General Secretary of AKEL, while a year later, following the Left's success in the 1943 municipal elections, right-wing politicians moved to the foundation of the Κυπριακόν Εθνικόν Κόμμα [Cypriot National Party – KEK].¹⁵⁰ The KEK sought both to impede the expansion of leftist influence and to form an anti-communist and nationalist pole within Greek-Cypriot politics that would advance the cause of enosis within the framework of Anglo-Hellenic friendship and through peaceful means.¹⁵¹ Themistocles Dervis, mayor of Nicosia and the first General Secretary of KEK, had been closely cooperating with the colonial government for over a decade. In 1935, Dervis had been awarded the title of Officer of the British Empire, and, three years later, he suggested that the elections should not be restored on the island.¹⁵² In this context, and as right-wing nationalist politics continued to be dominated by the Church, the appeal of the new party remained limited. Its very appearance, however, signified the great concern of the Greek-Cypriot elite about the growing influence of AKEL, considered as an 'internal enemy'.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ *Eleftheria*, 'Popular Council of the Church of Cyprus', 4 June 1941.

¹⁵⁰ A few months later, Servas was searched and arrested for allegedly carrying a revolver and revolutionary documents. He was eventually released, while all documents found on him were seized. NA, CO 67/314/14, Governor Charles Woolley to Secretary of State Viscount Cranborne, 2 April 1942; *Anexartitos*, 'Police search of the General Secretary of AKEL', 12 November 1942; NA, CO 67/314/15, Servas' memorandum to Secretary of State Oliver Stanley, 23 December 1942.

¹⁵¹ NA, FCO 141/2819, *KEK (Cyprus National Party); basic paper*, 22 June 1949; *Eleftheria*, 'The foundation of a Cypriot national party was decided', 7 June 1943.

¹⁵² Katsiaounis, 2000, pp. 43 and 47.

¹⁵³ *Eleftheria*, 'Yesterday's meeting in Nicosia for the formation of a Pan-Cypriot party', 5 June 1943.

The politics of AKEL and the Greek-Cypriot elite intersected on a major issue, that is the national question. In fact, as much as the foundation of AKEL marked the emergence of a political dynamic which challenged the confessional and conservative character of Greek-Cypriot politics, it also signified the nationalization of the discourse and politics of the Left. From its very first steps, the new party adopted the dominant nationalist and enosist discourse, which had been hitherto monopolized by the Church and the nationalist politicians. AKEL would also recognize the head of the Church as the ethnarch, or the natural leader of the Greek-Cypriot community and the national-liberation struggle.

In March 1942, AKEL announced that it would organize celebrations on the anniversary of the outbreak of the Greek War of independence (25 March 1821) across the island and the date was adopted by the party as an official annual celebration.¹⁵⁴ Only a decade earlier, on 25 March 1931, KKK members had taken down the Greek flag from the high school of Limassol and replaced it with a red flag.¹⁵⁵ Now the new party wanted to prove its allegiance to the national cause and gave extensive publicity to the celebrations. At the same time, the party severely criticized the Church, which had announced in February that the anniversary would not be celebrated due to the occupation of Greece.¹⁵⁶ Eventually, the Locum Tenens was forced to issue an elucidation stating that celebrations should not be affected by the previous announcement.¹⁵⁷ This move triggered a dispute between the Church and some of its allies, with the right-wing Nicosia clubs announcing that they would not participate in any celebrations.¹⁵⁸ One week before the anniversary, the Archimandrite of Kyrenia attacked AKEL's plan, stressing that the party was in essence anti-national, having therefore no right at all to be involved in the anniversary celebrations.¹⁵⁹ Eventually, the party celebrated the anniversary as planned, while services were held in churches. The Locum Tenens conducted the main liturgy in the church of Phaneromeni, in Nicosia, and prayed for the restitution of the Greek nation.¹⁶⁰ Overall, the dispute revealed the formation of two opposing camps within the Greek-Cypriot community, both of which attempted to assume the leadership of the national-liberation struggle.

¹⁵⁴ *Anexartitos*, 'The celebration of the March 25th in the countryside', 10 March 1942.

¹⁵⁵ NA, CO 67/239/14, *Political situation*, Governor Storrs to Secretary of State Lord Passfield, 4 June 1931.

¹⁵⁶ *Neos Kypriakos Phylax*, 'Greek Church of Cyprus: celebration of the March 25th', 14 February 1942; *Anexartitos*, 'The celebration of the anniversary of national rebirth', 25 March 1942.

¹⁵⁷ *Neos Kypriakos Phylax*, 'The celebration of the March 25th', 26 February 1942.

¹⁵⁸ *Eleftheria*, 'The national anniversary', 16 March 1942.

¹⁵⁹ *Neos Kypriakos Phylax*, 'Our national celebration and the party's aims', 18 March 1942.

¹⁶⁰ Yiangou, 2012, p. 75.

Due to lack of evidence, it remains unclear how and when the shift of the KKK position on the national question started. It seems possible, however, that the shift began during the second half of the 1930s, and specifically after the official election of Ploutis Servas as General Secretary of the KKK at the Third Party Congress in 1936.¹⁶¹ The new Secretary introduced two main innovations in party policy. Servas stressed the importance of trade union organizing, and insisted that the party should avoid appearing overly hostile to the Church and the nationalist discourse on enosis. Although the impact of Servas' opinion on the KKK's national politics is not certain, the position of AKEL, for which he also served as its first Secretary, indicates that a turn in the KKK's policy must have started some years before the foundation of AKEL.

In February 1942, Servas submitted an extensive memorandum to the Governor, in which he offered the cooperation of the party with the government for the better administration of the island and the protection of the working class.¹⁶² Servas criticized the record of the colonial authorities since 1878, and suggested a series of reforms that mainly concerned the establishment of representative institutions and the economic relief of the inhabitants, primarily the working class. Strikingly, the introductory paragraph of the memorandum stated that the party wished to cooperate with the government 'in the interests of the community', among others. Servas' text constituted a radical break with KKK and AKEL precedent, not only because of his conciliatory stance towards the authorities, but also for making no reference to the Turkish-Cypriot community. Even more significantly, the memorandum conceptualized the national issue in a line of arguments identical to that of the Church:

Cyprus, inhabited principally by Greeks for the last 3000 years, was provisionally occupied ... in 1878 by the British, in order ... to meet strategic requirements in the interests of Imperial Turkey... The Greeks in Cyprus hoped that at the end of the emergency the island would be handed over to Greece on historical and national grounds... In 1915 and 1916, Great Britain offered Cyprus with its 270,000 Greek inhabitants to Greece if the latter joined the Allies...; the Greek government at the time preferred neutrality over Cyprus, but in 1917 when ... Greece did join the Allies ... the Cypriot Greeks prayed and hoped for national union...

¹⁶¹ No evidence exists of the Third and Fourth Congresses of the KKK, held secretly in 1936 in Varoshi, Famagusta, and in 1940 in Derinea, Famagusta, respectively.

¹⁶² NA, CO 67/314/14, Servas' memorandum to Governor Charles Woolley, 25 February 1942.

Furthermore, the memorandum criticized the government's policy on education and asked for the lifting of the legislation on the archiepiscopal election.

In May 1942, AKEL addressed a memorandum to the Governor asking that the Atlantic Charter's provisions on self-determination be implemented in Cyprus. The memorandum stressed that this should be applied in the context of a recent statement of Greece's Prime Minister, who had spoken of enosis. The memorandum was published in the party newspaper *Anexartitos*, under the title 'enlistment under the condition of securing the union of Cyprus with mother Greece', together with a similar memorandum by the Locum Tenens, who also advocated for enosis in exchange for the mobilization of Greek-Cypriots in the war effort.¹⁶³ A month later, AKEL called the government to recognize the national status of the Greek-Cypriot schools, stressing that they should promote the national spirit of the community.¹⁶⁴ At the end of the year, the General Secretary of the party submitted a memorandum to Secretary of State Oliver Stanley that repeated the questions raised by the memorandum earlier sent to the Governor, though emphasizing government measures against AKEL's activities. Again, the text criticized, among other issues, government measures against the Church, it demanded the teaching of Greek history in schools, and protested against the government's refusal to allow posting pictures of Greek revolutionary heroes on school walls.¹⁶⁵

All the memoranda and documents submitted garnered no reaction from the Cyprus Government.¹⁶⁶ AKEL itself, however, gave these documents great publicity and supplied copies to organizations and politicians in Britain.¹⁶⁷ In January 1943, the Second Congress of the party declared that 'our only claim [is] the national claim' and demanded the national restoration of the island.¹⁶⁸ The party's newspaper reported extensively on the new position of AKEL on the national question. Meanwhile, many articles pointed to the party's attempts to come to an understanding with the Church.¹⁶⁹ The effort seemed to have met initial success, as the Locum Tenens responded positively to the party's request for his help in re-establishing political life on

¹⁶³ *Anexartitos*, 31 May 1942.

¹⁶⁴ *Anexartitos*, 'The national status of our schools should be recognized. The education of our children must have as basis the national consciousness of our people', AKEL's memorandum to Governor Woolley, 14 June 1942.

¹⁶⁵ NA, CO 67/314/15, Servas' memorandum to Secretary of State Oliver Stanley, 23 December 1942.

¹⁶⁶ NA, CO 67/314/15, extract from Government's despatch to the Colonial Office, 27 March 1943.

¹⁶⁷ *Anexartitos*, 'A.K.E.L.'s telegram to the MP Mr. Pritt', 16 June 1942.

¹⁶⁸ *Political Decisions*, Second Congress of AKEL, pp. 61-71.

¹⁶⁹ See *Anexartitos*, 'Our claims. Political liberties', 4 November 1942.

the island. Crucially, Leontios remained neutral in the municipal elections in March 1943, which proved a first test for the appeal of AKEL and its policies.¹⁷⁰

The party contested the elections in most towns and municipalities with candidates who were either party members or allies participating in a united front or a people's alliance. Most notably, the party supported the candidacy of Ioannis Clerides, the legal advisor of the Archbishopric and associate of the Locum Tenens, for mayor of Nicosia. The discourse employed by the opposing camps during the pre-election period signified the polarization of Greek-Cypriot politics between Left and Right and at the same time demonstrated the crystallization of the Left's nationalist politics and the diffusion of its discourse among the lower classes and even among AKEL's opponents.

The political platform of the right-wing candidates was mainly based, as expected, on the national question. The growing engagement of the working class with labour questions during the previous period and the militancy of AKEL, however, forced right-wing politicians to present a labour welfare programme. Thus the programme of the Εθνικός Συνδυασμός [National Combination] of Nicosia included, among other pledges, a reduction of taxation on workers and of the cost of living index.¹⁷¹ The right-wing candidates also called for the repeal of the authoritarian legislation imposed after the 1931 revolt and supported the political independence of municipalities from the government.¹⁷²

The candidates supported by the Left emphasized labour issues as well as the national question, while denouncing the candidates of the Right who had been appointed to official positions by the colonial authorities during the previous decade and had cooperated with the government.¹⁷³ A few days before the elections, Servas, who was himself a candidate in Limassol, repeatedly stressed that enosis constituted the national goal of communists in Cyprus:

¹⁷⁰ Archbishopric of Cyprus, Private Papers of Archbishop Leontios, Book 15, 'General Secretary of A.K.E.L. to Locum Tenens Leontios', 16 June 1942; and 'Locum Tenens Leontios to General Secretary of A.K.E.L.', 18 June 1942.

¹⁷¹ *Eleftheria*, 'The programme of the national combination of Nicosia', 6 March 1943; 'What is the programme of Mr Dervis' National Combination', 13 March 1943.

¹⁷² Yiangou, 2012, p. 96.

¹⁷³ Such was the case in Nicosia, Paphos and Famagusta. Criticism was mostly against Themistocles Dervis, the hitherto appointed mayor of Nicosia, who ran for mayor as the leader of Nicosia's *National Combination*. See

[A]re we ... a Cypriot nation? Can such a thing exist? ... [W]e do not have our own Cypriot language ... and everybody knows that we speak Greek... We also share a common religion with the Greeks ..., we also have the same historical traditions... There is no other civilization in Cyprus than the Greek one ... and there is no doubt that for Cyprus national restoration would mean union with Greece.¹⁷⁴

The elections proved a great success for AKEL. The candidates supported by the party in Limassol and Famagusta were elected mayors, while candidates supported by AKEL received 49.9% of the votes in towns across the island, in comparison to the 54.4% of the right-wing candidates.¹⁷⁵ On the eve of its success, the party embarked on a new nationalist campaign, calling for the collaboration among all political forces in the Greek-Cypriot community on claiming to advance the cause of enosis.

2.5 Attempts at the Formation of a Common National Front

Following the municipal elections, which demonstrated that the nationalist political discourse developed by AKEL had popular appeal, the party intensified its direct demands for enosis and called for the formation of a Εθνικό Συμβούλιο [National Council].¹⁷⁶ The council was supposed to bring together all Greek-Cypriot organizations under the presidency of the Locum Tenens with the single goal of promoting enosis. The initiative was rejected by the right-wing politicians and organizations, but not by Leontios, who received it positively. Leontios' frequent support for AKEL caused a strong reaction among conservative politicians, such as Dervis, and the inner circle of the Bishopric of Kyrenia. A few weeks after the elections, right-wing politicians criticized Leontios for meeting with the newly elected municipal council of Famagusta and praising the national activities of its members.¹⁷⁷ Similarly, a visit to the Archbishopric by a delegation of AKEL-affiliated cultural clubs from Morfou met with disapproval.¹⁷⁸ A series of

Anexartitos, 'The programme of the Popular Combination in Nicosia's municipal elections', 13 March 1943; and 'Why we have an imperative duty to vote for the popular combination', 20 March 1943.

¹⁷⁴ *Anexartitos*, 'Speech of Mr. Ploutis Servas, leader of the E.M.E.K.E.L.', 18 March 1943.

¹⁷⁵ The voters could vote for candidates from both ballot papers. Protopapas, 2012, p. 373.

¹⁷⁶ See *Anexartitos*, 'Our national question. The Locum Tenens has the word. Proclamation of the Central Committee of AKEL', 14 May 1943; and 'We fight for our Union with Mother Greece', 5 October 1943.

¹⁷⁷ *Anexartitos*, 'Meeting of the Municipal Council of Famagusta with the Locum Tenens', 18 April 1943.

¹⁷⁸ *Anexartitos*, 'Locum Tenens' efforts for the maintenance of the unity of the Greek Cypriot People', 21 April 1943.

articles in *Neos Kypriakos Phylax* criticized the Locum Tenens' overall attitude towards the party, and called upon him to abstain from inviting the Left to join the National Council, or any other institution that would claim to represent the community.¹⁷⁹ All the same, the Locum Tenens attempted to arrange a meeting with delegates from all Greek-Cypriot parties, including AKEL, the KEK, the Pan-Cypriot Farmers' Union (PEK), as well as members of the press, all elected mayors of the island, and some prominent political figures of the Greek-Cypriot community. The meeting aimed at discussing the formation of such a council, but proved unsuccessful as only the Left responded positively.¹⁸⁰ The KEK and all other right-wing organizations demanded the exclusion of AKEL as a condition for their participation.¹⁸¹

At the same time, AKEL invited its members and supporters to enlist in the British army to support the Allies in liberating Greece, so that enosis could be claimed after the war. 11 members of the party's Central Committee were the first to enlist in the Cyprus regiment.¹⁸² The appeal quickly proved highly successful, with about 700 members of the party enlisting within a few days of its publication. Notably, the volunteers were blessed by the Locum Tenens; that act resonated with the enlistments for the Balkan wars in 1912, which loomed large in Greek-Cypriot memory.¹⁸³

In April 1944, AKEL held its Third Congress, which focused on the war effort, peasant and labour issues, civil rights and the national question.¹⁸⁴ The Congress resolutions suggested a series of reforms for the protection of the peasant and working classes, and called for the national restoration of Cyprus, in the spirit of the Atlantic Charter. The Congress also addressed a systematic presentation of the party's priorities and positions to the Governor. The text asked for freedom to organize national and anti-fascist events and for the abolition of all antidemocratic articles of legislation, emphasizing the laws related to the archiepiscopal question. The text also stressed that the community had the right to be prepared for national restoration immediately after the liberation of Greece, and demanded the democratic administration of all political,

¹⁷⁹ *Neos Kypriakos Phylax*, 'With clear blood', 22 May 1943; editorials of 17 and 18 May and 5 June 1943.

¹⁸⁰ Yiangou, 2012, pp. 104-105.

¹⁸¹ *Eleftheria*, 'The foundation of a Cypriot National Party was decided', 7 June 1943.

¹⁸² *Anexartitos*, 'Appeal for voluntary enlistment of party's members in the military forces', 17 June 1943; ASKI, F-20/21/40, AKEL's report 'The course of the Cypriot movement', 6 August 1951.

¹⁸³ NA, CO 67/314/12, *Political situation: monthly reports from the Governor*, political report for June 1943.

¹⁸⁴ See *Political Decisions*, Third Congress of AKEL, pp. 73-82.

economic and educational affairs on the island and within the Greek-Cypriot community by elected representatives. Last, the resolution suggested a series of measures for the protection of the peasant and working classes, asked for the release from prison of all trade union members incarcerated in the previous period, and called for the improvement of prisoners' living conditions.

The resolution reflected the anti-colonial discourse which the party had been articulating since its foundation, and codified the national and socio-political claims of the Left. Party policy, now tinged with nationalism, considered enosis as the ultimate goal of the Greek-Cypriot community. Nevertheless, AKEL also put forward a social programme based on civil rights and the demand for a democratic administration. This duality of the party's anti-colonial discourse would be, with some variations, constantly stressed until the end of colonial rule. Overall, AKEL felt it had to prove its national credentials before it could play the role in Greek-Cypriot politics to which it aspired. To that end, AKEL pursued an understanding with the Church, now seen by the party as the natural leadership of the community. The moderate attitude of Leontios favoured this policy. In late 1943, the party and its affiliated organizations sent a despatch to the Governor, asking specifically for the abolition of the laws which impeded the archiepiscopal elections.¹⁸⁵ The move was warmly received by the Locum Tenens, who sent a despatch to AKEL, praising its repeated efforts towards the resolution of the question:

We have been following the representations of AKEL and the organizations of the working People ... in favour of the canonical solution of the said question and [we] express the gratification of the church ... for the orthodoxy of these popular protests... Please convey our gratitude to the Central Committee of AKEL and to ... the honourable Mr. Ploutis Servas.¹⁸⁶

The rapprochement between the Church and AKEL continued in the following years, until late 1947, when Leontios died and the Bishop of Kyrenia was elected Archbishop.

In mid-1944, the Locum Tenens attempted once more to form a National Council, which would embrace all political parties. This short-lived initiative was also bound to fail. The KEK not only considered AKEL a treacherous political force, but was critical of the attitude of

¹⁸⁵ *Anexartitos*, 'Our popular organizations about the archiepiscopal question', 27 November 1943.

¹⁸⁶ *Anexartitos*, 'Despatch of the Locum Tenens to the Central Committee of AKEL', 5 December 1943.

Leontios, who refused to denounce AKEL for its support of Greek communists.¹⁸⁷ In August of the same year, the occasion of the visit of the Under-Secretary of State, Sir Cosmo Parkinson, made coordination among Greek-Cypriot political forces more imperative than before. Leontios again invited all parties to submit a common memorandum demanding enosis immediately after the war.¹⁸⁸ AKEL responded positively, though its participation was again an obstacle for the Right, whose anti-communist crusade was openly backed by the Bishopric of Kyrenia.¹⁸⁹

On his arrival in Cyprus, Parkinson received a series of telegrams from various Greek-Cypriot organizations, mainly requesting union with Greece.¹⁹⁰ AKEL and the KEK, which issued separate proclamations demanding enosis, requested an interview with the Under-Secretary along with representatives of other Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot organizations.¹⁹¹ On 16 August, the government issued a communiqué prohibiting demonstrations, while Dervis and Servas, after being warned, promised that their parties would comply with the order.¹⁹² That same night, however, AKEL cadres, including Servas, participated in a demonstration in support of enosis, leading to their arrest.¹⁹³

A few days later, AKEL announced that it would organize peaceful demonstrations to express the national feeling of the Greek-Cypriot community.¹⁹⁴ Following the announcement, the government suspended the circulation of the trade union newspaper *Anorthosis* for reporting on the processions, brought police reinforcements to Nicosia and placed Indian soldiers along the main roads of Cyprus' towns.¹⁹⁵ Moreover, the Under-Secretary informed the General Secretary of the party that he would not grant him an interview if the demonstrations took place.¹⁹⁶ A few days before the planned demonstrations, the KEK denounced AKEL's policy and stressed the necessity of protecting Anglo-Greek friendship for securing a favourable settlement of the

¹⁸⁷ Archbishopric of Cyprus, Private Papers of Archbishop Leontios, Book 15, pp. 249-259.

¹⁸⁸ *Anexartitos*, 'The Locum Tenens' efforts for submission of a joint memorandum to Mr. Parkinson', 1 August 1944.

¹⁸⁹ *Eleftheria*, 'Restoration of the truth', 10 August 1944.

¹⁹⁰ *Anexartitos*, 'Sir Cosmo Parkinson arrived in Cyprus yesterday', 12 August 1944.

¹⁹¹ *Pysos*, 'Proclamation of the Cypriot National Party', 5 August 1944; *Anexartitos*, 'The national plebiscite of the people continues. More telegrams to Sir Cosmo', 18 August 1944.

¹⁹² NA, CO 67/323/3, *General political situation*, Governor Woolley to Secretary of State Oliver Stanley, 19 August 1944.

¹⁹³ *Anexartitos*, 'The arrested for the parade were prosecuted in front of the court', 19 August 1944.

¹⁹⁴ *Anorthosis*, 'Proclamation of the Central Committee of A.K.E.L. to the Cypriot people', 23 August 1944.

¹⁹⁵ *Anexartitos*, 'Protests for the suspension of Anorthosis', 26 August 1944; 'Why the interview of AKEL with Sir Cosmo Parkinson is being cancelled', 3 September 1944.

¹⁹⁶ *Anexartitos*, 'The Governor and Sir Cosmo to the Central Committee of A.K.E.L.', 27 August 1944.

national question after the war.¹⁹⁷ Eventually, AKEL refused to accept the Under-Secretary's invitation, unless the suspension of *Anorthosis* was lifted, and Parkinson met only with representatives from the KEK, who gave him a memorandum that emphasized British philhellene and liberal tradition.¹⁹⁸

Despite the tension between the Left and the Right, the imminent liberation of Greece and the participation of the Greek Left in a national unity government paved the way to a collaboration between the two Greek-Cypriot factions. In September 1944, AKEL called for the formation of a common Greek-Cypriot political organization that would collect funds for the reconstruction of Greece.¹⁹⁹ The suggestion was positively received by part of the right-wing press, which urged the *Locum Tenens* to launch an initiative to that purpose.²⁰⁰ With the KEK's pledge to support such a move, Leontios organized a meeting of representatives of all political parties, organizations and newspapers at the Archbishopric, which led to the formation of a pan-Cypriot Committee to work on that purpose.²⁰¹

Strikingly, the KEK called a few days later for the formation of a National Council, and joined the *Locum Tenens* in inviting the parties of the island to overcome their political differences in order to form a political organization that could advance the cause of enosis.²⁰² AKEL and the KEK indeed agreed to collaborate under the leadership of the *Locum Tenens*, and an agreement was finally reached in November 1944, after a period of negotiations between all parties and organizations.²⁰³ The right-wing organizations' doubts regarding AKEL's enosis politics was the main obstacle to an agreement. The issue was eventually resolved thanks to

¹⁹⁷ A few days after the demonstrations, the KEK expelled all party members who participated in the events. *Pyrros*, 'The Commune torpedoed', 25 August 1944; *Neos Kypriakos Phylax*, 'Expulsion of officials of the Cypriot National Party of Larnaca District', 30 August 1944.

¹⁹⁸ The Under-Secretary met also with representatives of the Turkish-Cypriot community, who stressed their opposition to enosis. *Anexartitos*, 'AKEL and P.S.E. do not accept invitation for interview with Sir Cosmo', 31 August 1944; *Neos Kypriakos Phylax*, 'National Party's Interview with Sir Cosmo', 23 August 1944.

¹⁹⁹ *Anexartitos*, 'Fundraising for Greece', 13 September 1944.

²⁰⁰ *Neos Kypriakos Phylax*, editorial, 16 September 1944.

²⁰¹ *Eleftheria*, 'Towards the conduct of new fundraising', 21 September 1944; *Pyrros*, 'Yesterday's pan-Cypriot assembly for the national fundraising', 26 September 1944; NA, CO 67/323/3, Acting Governor to the Secretary of State, 6 October 1944.

²⁰² *Eleftheria*, 'They are in favour of the National Council', 26 September 1944.

²⁰³ *Eleftheria*, 'The question of party truce. Announcement of A.K.E.L.', 9 October 1944; 'K.E.K. and the party truce', 10 October 1944; 'The meeting of the Cypriot parties for national collaboration held two days ago', 20 October 1944.

reassurances by Leontios.²⁰⁴ The conciliation, however, would prove short-lived. As the Greek national unity government collapsed in early December, violence broke out in the streets of Athens.²⁰⁵ The cooperation between the Greek-Cypriots followed swiftly. In January 1945, the seven-member Γραφείο Εθναρχίας [Ethnarchy Office] was founded, composed of nationalist figures from all over the island appointed by Leontios.²⁰⁶ The foundation of the body was followed by the formation of the Εθναρχικό Συμβούλιο [Ethnarchic Council], whose membership expanded to include 21 lay and clerical members from across the island. Most council members were right-wing figures, but it also included moderate politicians such as Clerides.²⁰⁷ In the same period, right-wing politicians started a campaign to expel left-wing teachers from schools. A notable victim of the campaign was the mayor of Famagusta Adam Adamantos, who was prohibited from teaching in the high school.²⁰⁸

After a period of open calls to all Greek-Cypriot parties and to the Locum Tenens to continue to collaborate in the campaign for enosis, AKEL eventually managed to hold a Εθνική Σύσκεψη [National Conference] in Limassol in June 1945. The conference was attended by centrist and moderate right-wing politicians.²⁰⁹ So as to prove its dedication to the national cause, the party leadership submitted an extensive declaration to the Conference, stressing AKEL's devotion to enosis and denouncing the politics of the KKK on the national question. The Conference led to the formation of the Ένωση Λεμεσού Εθνικής Συνεργασίας [Limassol Association of National Collaboration – ELES], which called on the Locum Tenens to form a representative National Council to replace the Ethnarchic Council.²¹⁰ Despite Leontios' attempts, the proposal was rejected by the majority of the Council, which wanted to prevent the Left from participating.

²⁰⁴ Responding to criticism by the Pan-Cypriot Farmers' Union Leontios stated: '[AKEL] works fanatically for our national restoration and wants enosis as much as everybody. As the Locum Tenens and the Ethnarch I am very happy because AKEL, a party about which there were doubts whether it would support enosis, is in the lead of the enosis struggle'. *Anexartitos*, 'The efforts for the realisation of national unity pay off', 16 November 1944.

²⁰⁵ For the so-called December events (Δεκεμβριανά) and the Greek civil war, see Philip Carabott and Thanasis Sfikas (eds.), *The Greek Civil War; essays on a conflict of exceptionalism and silences* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

²⁰⁶ *Eleftheria*, 'Foundation of Ethnarchy Office', 4 January 1945.

²⁰⁷ Katsiaounis, 2000, p. 134.

²⁰⁸ Panayiotou, 1999, p. 354.

²⁰⁹ *Anexartitos*, 'About a meeting in Limassol', 1 June 1945.

²¹⁰ *Anexartitos*, 'For achieving the national unity of the people. Declaration of the Central Committee of AKEL', 21 June 1945.

In August 1945, the Fourth Congress of AKEL called for the formation of a Εθνικοαπελευθερωτικό Μέτωπο [National – Liberation Front].²¹¹ The dual anti-colonial discourse employed at the previous Congress was maintained, with the party calling for enosis – characterized as ‘national destiny’ and seen as a precondition for the definite solution of any political and economic problems of the island – and for a democratic administration based on civil rights.²¹² The Congress also elected Fifis Ioannou as General Secretary; under his leadership, the party amplified the calls for enosis and for the formation of a national-liberation front. Moreover, AKEL declared that the national-liberation struggle should be totally peaceful. AKEL envisaged that victory would come through pressure exerted on Britain by the British and international public, by the Greek people and government, and by international organizations.²¹³ The party further made clear that the front should operate under the leadership of the Locum Tenens. This concession to the leadership of the anti-colonial struggle of the Church came due to the realization that the moderate Leontios was the only personality that could overcome the Right's refusal to collaborate with AKEL, and unite all Greek-Cypriot political factions in a common front against the British.

Although the attempts to form a common front failed, AKEL's tactics were soon to prove successful. In May 1946, the party and its allies, which had campaigned on a platform of national unity, triumphed in the municipal elections. Candidates supported by the party prevailed in four out of six municipalities of the island (Limassol, Famagusta, Larnaca and Nicosia), as well as in many rural communities, securing a total of 56.3% of the vote.²¹⁴ The Right maintained power only in the smaller municipalities of Kyrenia and Paphos. Most significantly, Dervis, mayor of Nicosia and General Secretary of the KEK, lost to the moderate Clerides, who had again received the support of AKEL. Despite the scope of its great victory, however, AKEL did not attempt to function exclusively outside the space of the Church, but rather to expand further its organizational structures. The immediate goal of the party was to transform its electoral alliances

²¹¹ *Anexartitos*, ‘For the national freedom and the economic recovery of our people; Declaration of the Fourth Congress of AKEL’, 26 August 1945.

²¹² *Anexartitos*, ‘AKEL and our national future; memorandum to the Governor’, 24 August 1945.

²¹³ *Anexartitos*, ‘Towards the Pan-Cypriot Conference of A.K.E.L.. The directions of AKEL’, 12-13 October 1945; ‘Despatches. The role of the ELES’, article of the General Secretary of AKEL, 6 November 1945; ‘On the return of the Locum Tenens. Our national struggle. Decision of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of AKEL’, 13 December 1945.

²¹⁴ Protopapas, 2012, p. 373.

into a broad pan-Cypriot national-liberation organization under the leadership of the Church.²¹⁵ Soon after the elections, the newly elected municipal councils called again for the enlargement of the Ethnarchic Council so as to include the elected mayors of the Left.²¹⁶ Nevertheless, despite the renewed attempts of the Locum Tenens any such moves were destined to fail, given the resistance of the right-wing politicians and the conservative leadership of the Church, which constituted the majority of the Ethnarchic Council, to the participation of the Left.²¹⁷ By contrast, the success of AKEL triggered the reaction of many right-wing politicians and clerics, who, although they did not previously support the Locum Tenens, now rallied around the emerging ethnarch.

2.6 The Consolidation of Ethnarchic Enosist Politics

The success of the Left in the municipal elections alarmed both the Greek-Cypriot elite and the colonial government, while further developments within and outside Cyprus during the same period led to the reshaping of Greek-Cypriot politics.

First, the decision of the government to repeal the laws regarding the archiepiscopal election allowed for the long awaited resolution of the problem, creating new conditions for the relations between the Church and the Left, as well as between the two and the government. The first cracks in the position of the colonial authorities on the question had actually been observable since August 1940. The Secretary of State, Lord Lloyd, had met with the Archbishop of Canterbury, and they agreed that the Archbishop would conduct an unofficial consultation with the Ecumenical Patriarchate through Archbishop Germanos, with a view to devising a way out of the impasse. In the following months, Lord Lloyd agreed to a plan outlined by Germanos that would repeal the laws so that the patriarchate could send bishops to Cyprus and form a Synod. In exchange, the bishops would confirm that no candidate would be elected without the

²¹⁵ *Anexartitos*, 'Positions of the Central Committee of AKEL on the immediate national duties', 1 August 1946.

²¹⁶ *Kypriakos Typos* (*Cypriot Press*), 'They may participate', 3 June 1946; *Eleftheria*, 'The new Municipal Councils call for a more representative Ethnarchic Council', 3 June 1946.

²¹⁷ In April 1947, the Ethnarchic Council rejected once again the proposal of the Left to form a common national-liberation front, causing the resignation of Clerides from the body. *Anexartitos*, 'Interview of the Ethnarch with representatives of AKEL. Complete unanimity of views', 10 August 1946; 'On the Session of the Ethnarchic Council two days ago', 18 April 1947.

Governor's approval.²¹⁸ Although Governor Woolley also adopted a position in favour of the repeal of the laws, the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Patriarch of Jerusalem were opposed to a joint intervention and were disposed to await developments after the war.²¹⁹ The laws were finally repealed in October 1946, to a great extent due to the colonial authorities' determination to strengthen the position of the Church as a counterbalance to the growing appeal of the Left, made manifest in that year's municipal elections.²²⁰ The British attributed the expansion of AKEL's appeal to the diminishing of the influence of the Church, and they considered Leontios 'little more than a puppet in the hands of politicians'.²²¹ The party itself had emerged since early 1945 as the island's single-most important political actor, and was described by Governor Woolley as the government's greatest threat.²²²

The candidates for the Archiepiscopal See were the Archbishop of Sinai Porfyrios and the Locum Tenens. Porfyrios was supported by the Bishopric of Kyrenia, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Archbishopric of Athens and the KEK.²²³ The Locum Tenens was supported by the abbots of the monasteries of Chrisoroyiatissa, Machaira and Stavrovouni, AKEL and several leftist and centrist politicians. At the elections in May 1947, 900 out of 1000 elected special representatives supported the Locum Tenens, and he was enthroned at the Archiepiscopal See in June of the same year.²²⁴ Having waited so long for his enthronement, he died a month later and was succeeded by Makarios, the Bishop of Kyrenia, who had been allowed back from exile in December 1946.

²¹⁸ NA, CO 67/313/8, A.B. Acheson to Governor Woolley, 11 January 1942; memorandum on Cyprus Archbishopric, 28 March 1941.

²¹⁹ NA, CO 67/321/6, *Archiepiscopal question*, Colonial Office official's minute, March 1944; Governor to Acheson, 24 June 1944.

²²⁰ A similar policy was followed by colonial governments in many regions of the Empire. After the Second World War the colonial authorities in Malta and the local Catholic Church collaborated against the Malta Labour Party. In Cyprus' case, however, the initial militant position of the Church on the subject of enosis, as well as the ongoing collaboration between Leontios and the Left up to the end of the 1940s, precluded a permanent rapprochement between the government and the Church. See Robert Holland, 'The British, the Mediterranean and the Anglo-Cypriot relationship: What went wrong and can it be put right?', *ERPIC (European Rim Policy and Investment Council) Report*, 11 (September 2009), pp. 5-6.

²²¹ NA, CO 67/324/4, *Political exiles*, Governor Woolley to Secretary of State Stanley, 31 March 1945.

²²² *Ibid.*

²²³ *Ethnos (Nation)*, 'The national forces of Cyprus decided to nominate and support Porfyrios of Sinai for Archbishop', 25/4, 1947.

²²⁴ According to the Charter of the Church of Cyprus, the archbishop was chosen through a system of indirect voting. All male Greek-Cypriot Orthodox Christians took part in selecting a number of special representatives, who then elected a number of general representatives, laymen and clerics. The general representatives, together with officials of the Church, elected the Archbishop. *Eleftheria*, 'Great majority in favour of Leontios' candidature', 5 May 1947; *Ethnos*, 'The Bishop of Paphos accepted his election', 21 June 1947.

The final resolution of the archiepiscopal question and the election of Makarios II had a twofold significance for Cypriot politics. On one hand, the government's accession to the Church's demands and the ascendancy of Leontios to the Archiepiscopal See, after having been opposed by the British for over a decade, were a sign that the Church had prevailed in its confrontation with the colonial authorities. On the other hand, the very election of Makarios marked a definite rupture of the relations between the Church and the Left. Less than a year after his election the Holy Synod issued a circular against communism, while the journals affiliated to the Church frequently published anti-communist articles.²²⁵ The fragile rapprochement between the Church and the Left, evident ever since the foundation of AKEL, had relied almost exclusively on the moderate policy of Leontios. The new Archbishop constantly attacked AKEL, while, in late 1940, the newspaper *Efimeris* (*Newspaper*), edited by the Secretary of the Bishopric of Kyrenia Polykarpos Ioannides, had openly called for the proscription of the party.²²⁶ In fact, the government's decision to allow the return of Makarios was also taken under the consideration that he could be a strong ally against AKEL. The fact that the Bishop was an ardent anti-communist and had made serious attempts to prevent AKEL's effort to form a united front promoting enosis had led Governor Woolley to consider his presence on the island as politically advantageous.²²⁷

The policy of Leontios, during whose term as Locum Tenens (1933-1947) the Church developed an understanding with the Left, was in fact as undesirable for the Greek-Cypriot elite as it was for the colonial authorities. Before and after his term, anticommunism was a constant feature of the prelacy's discourse and policy, drawing the Church closer to the government and providing ground for common action on many occasions. As an official of the Colonial Office put it in 1939, 'it is prejudicial ... to the British Empire too that the Christian religion, even in the form in which it is nominally imparted by the Cypriot branch of the Orthodox Church, should be allowed to die out', as 'the alternative ... tends towards proletarian Communism'.²²⁸ In the

²²⁵ *Apostolos Varnavas*, 'Synodical Circular against communism', 7-966 September 1948, pp. 163-167. See 'Communism and Church', 1949, vol. 1, pp. 5-17; 'National Treason', vol. 8, p. 130, 6 April 1949; 'Christianity and Communism', 1949, vol. 8, p. 305; 'The Communist State', 1951, vol. 1, pp. 48-49; 'Materialism' 1952, vol. 11, pp. 299-301.

²²⁶ Rolandos Katsiaounis, 'Cyprus 1931-1959: The Politics of the Anti-colonial movement', *Epetiris Kentrou Epistimonikon Ereunon*, 33 (2007), 457.

²²⁷ NA, CO 67/321/8, *Archiepiscopal question*, Governor Woolley to Secretary of State George Henry Hall, 23 March 1946.

²²⁸ NA, CO 67/297/4, Alan Graham's memorandum to Secretary of State Malcolm MacDonald, 29 June 1939.

same spirit, a 1941 memorandum on the Cyprus Archbishopric proposed that, after the war, the Church should become a strong ally of the government in its struggle against communism.²²⁹

Indeed, the confrontation between the Church and the Left would soon peak, justifying the government's conciliatory attitude towards the former. At the end of 1945, with resistance against colonialism on the rise across the globe, and in the face of the growing political pressure exercised by the anti-colonial movement on the island, the newly-elected Labour government in Britain hinted at the possibility of granting a constitution in Cyprus, after consulting with representatives of the local population. In July 1947, the Governor announced plans for the introduction of a constitution, and declared his intention to form a Consultative Assembly composed by representatives from both communities to assist the government in that task.²³⁰ The formation of the Assembly would stand as a critical point for the confrontation between the politics of AKEL and that of the Church.

AKEL and its affiliate, the Παγκύπρια Εργατική Ομοσπονδία [Pan-Cypriot Labour Federation – PEO], were the only groups from the Greek-Cypriot community to participate in the Assembly, in contrast to the Church and the KEK, which denounced any negotiation with the government. Most importantly, AKEL participated in the Assembly having modified its position on the national question. Its new slogan was now 'self-government – enosis', which caused the strong reaction of its rivals, who accused the party of betraying the national cause. In December 1947, the Bishopric of Kyrenia, under Bishop Makarios in his capacity as Locum Tenens, issued an announcement, making clear its position against the politics of AKEL:

His Reverence the Locum Tenens stressed that Cyprus ... will remain steadfast to its national demand and will never lower the flag of Enosis... In view of the pathetic attitude of the few communists who separated from the national body and ask for autonomy, His Reverence the Locum Tenens said that the national struggle of the Island will be inevitably fought on two fronts from now on. Namely, the people have to withstand both England and its allies, the autonomists.²³¹

²²⁹ NA, CO 67/313/8, memorandum on Cyprus Archbishopric, 28 March 1941.

²³⁰ For an in-depth analysis of the significance of the Consultative Assembly see Katsiaounis, 2000, mainly pp. 201-468.

²³¹ *Eleftheria*, 'Announcement of the Kyrenia Bishopric on the statement of the Reverend Locum Tenens', 21 December 1947.

The change in the line of AKEL and its participation to the Assembly should be attributed to a great extent to the party's continuous attempts to take over the political initiative on the national question from the Church and the Greek-Cypriot elite, and lead the national-liberation struggle itself. A moderate success in the Assembly and an advantageous temporary solution for the Cyprus issue could realistically render the Left the winner of the confrontation. In December 1947, two months after the Fifth Congress of AKEL, the party moved to found the Εθνικός Απελευθερωτικός Συνασπισμός [Alliance for the National Liberation – EAS], aiming at escalating the mobilizations for self-government – enosis. The organization included leftist politicians as well as middle class centrist allies, such as Clerides, who was the head of the alliance.

A few months later, in May 1948, AKEL decided to withdraw from the Assembly, faced with the government's refusal to grant self-government and under intense criticism from its opponents. In July of the same year, the Holy Synod decided on the enlargement of the Ethnarchic Council, but again excluded AKEL. The party's participation in the Consultative Assembly gave the Church the opportunity to reinforce its position as the ethnarchic leadership of the Greek-Cypriot community and achieve its principal goal: to monopolize the slogan of enosis. The strengthening of the Church's stance became immediately apparent. In October of the same year, a few weeks after the archbishop had issued a circular against communism, the Holy Synod amended the charter of the Church, aiming at excluding communists and fellow travellers from the process of ecclesiastical elections.²³²

Six months later, in view of the upcoming municipal elections, the Ethnarchy Office denounced anyone collaborating with communists, characterizing it as equal to national treason.²³³ The danger that AKEL represented to the confessional politics of the Church necessitated an alliance among all anti-communist political actors. The position of the Church had been seriously reinforced after the election of Archbishop Makarios, and his subsequent re-organization of church administration, leading many right-wing politicians and other bourgeois figures to rally around behind Makarios. The new Archbishop constantly urged the lay elite to distance itself from the government, and criticized those prominent Greek-Cypriots who had

²³² See *Apostolos Varnavas*, "Amendment I of the Charter of the Cyprus Church", vol. 10, 15 October 1948, p. 188.

²³³ *Apostolos Varnavas*, 'National Treason', vol. 8, 6 April 1949, p. 130.

attended the ceremonial parade and social reception organized at the Government House on the occasion of King George VI's birthday.²³⁴

Meanwhile, political developments in Greece following the end of the Second World War had a direct impact on Greek-Cypriot politics. The repercussions of the Greek Civil War (1946-1949) exacerbated the conflict between AKEL and the Greek-Cypriot nationalist elite.²³⁵ Throughout the war, AKEL remained in open communication with the Communist Party of Greece, while it also organized fundraising campaigns in support of the Democratic Army of Greece (DSE). Furthermore, in 1946, members of the Greek extreme right-wing organization X (Xhi) arrived in Cyprus, to form a sister organization on the island.²³⁶ That first group of Xhi was particularly active during the 1947 archiepiscopal elections, while, two years later, the National Peasant Party of Xhites [members of X] of Cyprus was founded.²³⁷

In the same year, the inauguration of the Truman Doctrine, which replaced Britain's role in supplying military and economic aid to the Greek Government with the United States, enabled Athens to adopt a much more active policy on the question of enosis, as had been constantly requested by the Greek-Cypriot nationalist elite. In late 1947, a statement of the Greek Prime Minister in support of enosis reinforced the position of the Church, which again accused the Left of treason for its participation in the Consultative Assembly.²³⁸

The confrontation between the Left and the right-wing, now ethnarchic, political space, which was receiving the full support of the colonial government, was vividly expressed in the campaign for the 1949 municipal election. In his address to the commissioners of the island in February 1949, the Acting Governor stated:

[A] glancing blow was delivered at the Right. For a long time now we have turned a blind eye to the seditious aspect of the advocacy of enosis. We shall continue to

²³⁴ Heraclidou, 2011, p. 161.

²³⁵ For an examination of the impact of Greek civil war on Greek-Cypriot politics, see Alexis Alekou, *1948: Ο ελληνικός εμφύλιος και η Κύπρος* [1948: *The Greek civil war and Cyprus*] (Nicosia: Power Publishing, 2012).

²³⁶ The organization Xhi was a paramilitary anticommunist organization, founded in Athens in 1941 by General Georgios Grivas, an army official of Greek-Cypriot origin. Xhi was active during the period of the occupation of Greece by Germany and the first period of the Greek civil war. In the early 1950s, Grivas founded the Εθνική Οργάνωσις Κυπρίων Αγωνιστών [National Organization of Cypriot Fighters – EOKA] in Cyprus, which in 1955 moved to armed confrontation against the British, aiming at enosis.

²³⁷ Alekou, 2011, pp. 110-111.

²³⁸ Ibid., p. 119.

do so... We must concentrate upon the communists... The religious influence of the Church is ... especially important at this time because of its anti-communist nature. What I should like to secure would be an implicit truce between Government and the Church on the question of enosis...²³⁹

A few weeks before the May municipal elections, the American Government urged the Cyprus authorities to assist the nationalists in consolidating their position, and to open a strong lead over the candidates of the Left. The Americans also suggested that the Church be urged to stress openly its support of the nationalist candidates. The American Government promised it would exert its influence on that respect on the Archbishop of Greece Damaskinos, friend of Archbishop Makarios, and on the Greek and Turkish governments.²⁴⁰

Indeed, the Left suffered a serious setback in the elections, which marked the end of the potential formation of a common front with the Right. As the latter continued to attack AKEL for its alleged betrayal of the national struggle, AKEL and its allies received a total 48% of the vote, down from the 56% three years earlier.²⁴¹ The party was forced to admit that its participation in the Consultative Assembly and the demand for self-government had proved detrimental to its appeal. The negative result also triggered a severe crisis within the party.²⁴² In January 1949, following a series of meetings between the leadership of AKEL and the Communist Party of Greece, the AKEL Central Committee denounced the support of constitutional reforms and participation in the Assembly. It further renounced self-government as an intermediary goal, and stressed that the only goal of the party should be enosis.²⁴³ Two months later, the Central Committee resigned and appointed a Temporary Central Leadership (Καθοδήγηση) to guide the party until the Sixth Congress.²⁴⁴ The new line was given extensive coverage in the left-wing Press, while the Congress, held in August 1949, repeated its renouncing of support for self-

²³⁹ NA, CO 537/4309, *Communist activities in the Colonies: Cyprus*, Acting Governor's opening of Commissioners' Conference, 11 February 1949.

²⁴⁰ Archbishop Damaskinos (1941-1949) had been particularly useful to the British in their handling of the political crisis in Greece after the end of the Second World War. Under British pressure, he was proclaimed Regent in December 1944, a position he maintained until September 1946. NA, CO 537/4974, *AKEL Party*, instructions from State Department, mid-1949; memoranda by E. Peck, Foreign Office official, 15/3 and 8 April 1949; Peck to M. Fisher, Colonial Office official, 8 April 1949.

²⁴¹ Protopapas, 2012, p. 468.

²⁴² ASKI, F-20/21/20, AKEL's report 'The Municipal Elections of May 1949', early 1950.

²⁴³ ASKI, F-20/21/21, *Activities Report of the Central Committee of A.K.E.L. September 1947 – May 1949*; F-20/21/19, *Announcement of the Temporary Central Leadership of A.K.E.L.*, 1949; F-20/21/47, 'A brief review'.

²⁴⁴ *Anexartitos*, 'Statement of the resigned members of the Central Committee of AKEL', 10 March 1949.

government and participation in the Consultative Assembly, and called for the intensification of the struggle for enosis.²⁴⁵

As ethnarchic politics had prevailed within the Greek-Cypriot community, AKEL was now forced to readopt the intransigent enosist line. Nevertheless, the party's national politics would remain under the shadow of the Church until the end of colonial rule. In August 1949, on the occasion of the arrival of Governor Sir Andrew Wright, the party organized large-scale demonstrations across the island and signings of resolutions demanding enosis, and announced the holding of a plebiscite on the question of union with Greece.²⁴⁶ The Church managed, however, to take back the political initiative, and announced in November its own plebiscite, to be organized by the Ethnarchic Council. AKEL, the left-wing mayors and the PEO were not consulted in the decision. The party, however, cancelled its own plebiscite, lending its support to the one organized by the Church and campaigning for voting in favour of enosis.²⁴⁷ According to the decision of the Council, the plebiscite was scheduled for 15 January 1950 and a circular would be sent to the government, inviting it to oversee the process. In case of refusal, the plebiscite would be organized by the Church. All inhabitants of Cyprus above the age of 18 would have the right to vote.

The government naturally refused to conduct the plebiscite and warned that the question of union with Greece had been closed, with the consent of the Greek Government. This, however, did not prohibit the holding of the plebiscite, resting on the fact that its results would lack any official validity.²⁴⁸ The plebiscite, organized by the Church and supported fully by the Left, would raise even greater concerns for the colonial authorities, mostly the potential of an alliance between the Right and the Left. The Left, however, was becoming increasingly subordinated to the politics of the Church, and it would soon fall to the latter to lead a militant anti-colonial movement against the British presence on the island. Worried about the radical turn that the enosis movement was taking on the island, still considered by the colonial authorities as

²⁴⁵ The Congress also elected Ezekias Papaioannou as General Secretary. See *Political Decisions*, Sixth Congress of AKEL, 27-28 August 1949, pp. 131-145.

²⁴⁶ *Chroniko* [Chronicle], 'The pan-Cypriot enosist plebiscite of 15 January 1950', vol. 48, p. 6.

²⁴⁷ *Apostolos Varnavas*, 'Ethnarchic Circular on holding of pan-Cypriot Plebiscite', 8 December 1949, pp. 469-471; *Chronicle*, *ibid.*, p. 8; *Anexartitos*, 'For the better organization of the enosist plebiscite', 21 December 1949; 'For the utilization of our enosist plebiscite', 16 January 1950; ASKI, F-20/21/24, brochure 'We claim the union of Cyprus with Greece', distributed all over Cyprus, 30 December 1949.

²⁴⁸ *Apostolos Varnavas*, Governor Sir Andrew Wright to the Archbishop, 17 December 1949, pp. 21-22.

an integral part of the Empire, Governor Wright asked the Colonial Office for further repressive powers.²⁴⁹ According to the results of the plebiscite, 95.7% of the Greek-Cypriot population voted in favour of enosis.²⁵⁰ The plebiscite quickly became global news, as it was extensively covered by the Greek and international press, while copies of the signed ballot papers were handed to the president of the Greek parliament and the Secretariat of the United Nations.

Conclusion

By the end of the 1940s, enosis politics had conclusively prevailed, and enjoyed the support of all political forces within the Greek-Cypriot community. The Church of Cyprus had emerged both as the most prominent advocate of enosis and the single most powerful political actor on the island. Most significantly, the consolidation of Greek nationalism as the dominant political discourse among Greek-Cypriots brought about a homogenization of politics as in its essence anti-colonial. In other words, the outcome of the period's multi-faceted conflict of power was to a great extent the emergence of a radical form of nationalism that constituted the main point of convergence among the competing confessional and secular political forces within the Greek-Cypriot community. As nationalism came to be a main force behind the politicization of Greek-Cypriot society during the 1930s and 1940s, the political force that would manage to determine its content would also consolidate its position as winner of the conflict. During the next decade, Cyprus would witness a militant national liberation struggle, headed by the Church of Cyprus. The origins of this seemingly paradoxical development can be traced to the period under scrutiny.

During this period of British rule, the Church proved itself capable of adapting to the emergence of new political forces that challenged its authority. Most significantly, it managed to resolve the major confrontations that broke out in the Greek-Cypriot community under its own terms and within its own political space, and was to a large degree successful in controlling the politicization of the community. Already in the mid-1920s, the rivalry between the intransigent

²⁴⁹ NA, CO 537/6228, *Constitution*, J. Bennett's minute, 21 January 1950, Colonial Office. For an in-depth analysis of the strategic significance of Cyprus for the British, see Klearchos Kyriakides, 'British Cold War strategy and the struggle to maintain military bases in Cyprus, 1951-60' (University of Cambridge D.Phil Thesis, 1996).

²⁵⁰ Protopapas, 2012, p. 490.

and the moderate unionists was made manifest as a rivalry between the Bishoprics of Kyrenia and Kition. In the beginning of the next decade, the appropriation of the legacy of the 1931 revolt secured political initiative for the Church, which thus managed to claim the lead role in the formation of Greek-Cypriot politics, with enosis emerging as the only form that expressed anti-colonial feeling. A few years later, the trial of Leontios led the whole Greek-Cypriot elite to come to his support, and at the same time to recognize him as leader. Notably, the Church dominated right-wing politics, helping to prevent the emergence of an organized, and most notably secular, right-wing party. In the late 1940s, the political initiatives and tactical moves of Archbishop Makarios II forced the majority of the lay elite, including those who had in the past enjoyed close relations with the government, to rally around him.

Secondly, the Church prevailed in its confrontation with the colonial authorities and managed to secure a number of concessions from the government. The Church won the conflict over the archiepiscopal question, which lasted from 1933 to 1947. The government was eventually forced to concede to all the demands set by the Church, to a great extent thanks to the successful mobilization of powerful international religious networks. The very election of the *Locum Tenens*, one of the most prominent anti-government figures during colonial rule, to the archiepiscopal throne demonstrated the failure of British policies to accomplish one of the government's main objectives: to control the power of the Church and the appeal of nationalist politics to Greek-Cypriots. The Church's radical enosis politics would set the tone of the anti-colonial movement on the island until the end of British rule.

Finally, by successfully dominating political discourse within the Greek-Cypriot community, the Church succeeded in heading off the secular political force that had been encroaching on its political space. By the early 1940s, a broad, left-wing political movement had been formed, whose politics and discourse were formulated along class lines, and which claimed to represent the interests of the Cypriot working class beyond confessional line. Despite the significant initial success and growing appeal of the Left, which allowed it to dominate Greek-Cypriot politics until 1947, AKEL chose not to challenge the nationalist discourse put forward by the Church. By the end of the decade, and despite certain variations in its position on the national question – most vividly manifested by its participation in the Consultative Assembly – the Left eventually adopted completely the enosis politics promoted by the Church. Following

the failure of the Assembly experiment, and despite the renewed cooperation between the government and the clergy against the party, AKEL would increasingly define its role within the political context set by the Church. The party abandoned its attempts to formulate an anti-colonial discourse different from the politics of enosis, and was eventually forced to recognize the Church as the national leadership of the Greek-Cypriot community. In 1950, AKEL's support to the Church in organizing the plebiscite on enosis would illustrate the latter's emergence as the lead political actor in defining the politics of the community against the British authorities, a role it would maintain until the end of colonial rule on the island.

Chapter 3: From Loyalism to Nationalism in Turkish-Cypriot Politics

This chapter explores the shaping of Turkish-Cypriot politics from the second half of the 1920s until the late 1940s. In contrast with the Greek-Cypriot community, the traditionalist Turkish-Cypriot elite remained perfectly loyal to the British up to the second half of the 1950s. It proved more vulnerable, however, to a Kemalist nationalist and modernist political force emerging within the community after the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. By the Second World War, the modernists had definitely prevailed within the community, to the alarm of the colonial authorities, which strove to control their appeal. The new leadership demanded reforms that would modernize the community and expand its autonomy. At the same time, they put forward an increasingly militant nationalist discourse that called for the restoration of Cyprus to Turkey, in case Britain left the island. In the face of an ever more radical Greek-Cypriot nationalism, Turkish-Cypriot nationalist politics were gradually consolidated by the end of the 1940s.

As mentioned in the Introduction, there is a major deficiency of secondary sources on the Turkish-Cypriot community, making the interpretation of Cyprus' colonial history incomplete; this chapter therefore seeks to contribute in bridging this significant historiographical gap, and suggests a narrative for the political and social history of the community.

3.1 The Politics of the Traditionalist Elite and Early Controversy

A few days after Cyprus was formally annexed by Britain in November 1914, the Cadi, the Mufti, the Turkish delegate of Evkaf and other prominent figures of the Turkish-Cypriot elite wrote to Secretary of State Lewis Vernon Harcourt, expressing their satisfaction and promising loyalty to His Majesty the King.¹ Acting High Commissioner Harry Luke noted that the reactions

¹ NA, CO 67/179, *Offices: Foreign*, despatch to the Secretary of State, Lewis Harcourt, 17 November 1914.

of the Turkish-Cypriot notables, after being informed that they had become British citizens rather than subjects of the Caliph, was one of ‘dignified resignation’.²

Since the beginning of British rule on the island, the traditionalist Turkish-Cypriot elite had relied on the government for maintaining its power and control over communal affairs. All the more, in a period when the Greek-Cypriot leadership’s calls for enosis seemed to gain some traction within British circles, the maintenance of British rule in comparison appeared as a much less disadvantageous development. Certainly, the declaration of loyalty to the British had a strong element of self-interest, as it meant that the elite could secure its posts on the island; the Cadi and the Turkish delegate of the Evkaf had been previously appointed by the Ottoman Government. In October of the following year, after Britain formally offered Cyprus to Greece, the opinion among Turkish-Cypriots in favour of the maintenance of British rule was strengthened.³ In a series of memoranda and petitions to the British authorities, leading figures of the community denounced the British offer and the possibility of enosis. A decade later, in May 1925, when Cyprus was proclaimed a Crown Colony, all three Turkish-Cypriot members of the Legislative Council expressed again their full satisfaction.⁴

Until the 1920s, the loyalist politics of the traditionalist Turkish-Cypriot elite remained almost completely unchallenged. Appreciating this stance, the government granted considerable powers to prominent political figures of the community, upon whom it relied for administering the island. During the 1910s and the first half of the 1920s, Irfan Bey was the most significant figure of the community; he had been elected to the Legislative Council in 1913 and served until his death in 1925. In 1903, Irfan Bey had been appointed by the Ottoman authorities as the Turkish Evkaf delegate. Following the annexation of the island, legislation was introduced, according to which both Evkaf delegates would be appointed by the High Commissioner. Irfan Bey was reappointed to his old position, as well as to the colony’s Executive Council.⁵ Throughout his political career, he proved unswervingly loyal to the British administration and, together with the other two Muslim members of the Legislative Council, he almost invariably

² Holland, 1998, p. 11.

³ A first, informal approach of the Greek Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos by British ministers had been made at the end of 1912: Georgios Georgiallides, *Cyprus, British Imperialism and Governor Sir Ronald Storrs* (Nicosia: Zavallis Press, 1988), 17.

⁴ See Nevzat, 2005, pp. 239-241.

⁵ *The Cyprus Gazette*, 1915, ‘Appointments’, p. 9207.

collaborated with the British members, to the extent that the King's Advocate noted, 'it was only by the assistance of the Moslem members that the Government managed to carry on'.⁶

Immediately after Irfan Bey's death, the British chose Münir Bey as his successor. Münir Bey had been in government service since 1906, and had been temporarily appointed judge of a district court in 1923.⁷ Two months after his appointment as the Turkish delegate of Evkaf, he was elected to the Legislative Council, filling the seat left vacant by Irfan Bey's death. In 1926, he was also appointed as additional member of the Executive Council.⁸ Münir Bey held 11 other public appointments on the island and was also decorated with the Order of the British Empire. As the Acting Governor put it in 1932, 'He is 100 per cent pro-British, has the mentality of the old Turkish Pasha and has absorbed into himself every office he could'.⁹

Nevertheless, the absolute loyalism and overall politics of the traditionalist elite did not always remain undisputed, nor were they homogeneous in all their facets. In December 1918, protesting against the renewed efforts of the Greek-Cypriot leadership to raise the question of enosis at the Paris Peace Conference, leading figures of the community issued a resolution demanding the restoration of Cyprus to the Ottoman Empire, if Britain ever abandoned the island.¹⁰ In early 1920, a few months before the signing of the Treaty of Sèvres, the newspaper *Doğru Yol (The Right Way)* decried the expected provisions for an independent Armenia, and stressed that the Turks had expected that their own national rights would also be satisfied.¹¹ The newspaper further emphasized that the Greeks had caused thousands of persons to die in Smyrna, and stated that 'the destruction of the innocent ... Turkish nation was decided in order to please the Armenians and Greeks', the 'deadly enemy' of Turkey. A few days later the newspaper asserted:

The Turks who have taken part in the general war with the lofty aspirations of preserving their national independence and glory... have demonstrated that they are the true heirs of their ancestors' bravery and valour... The occupation of

⁶ Nevzat, 2005, p. 216.

⁷ NA, CO 67/247/13, *Munir Bey. Conversations with Colonial Office Officials*, Acting Governor's report on Munir Bey, August 1932.

⁸ *The Cyprus Gazette*, 1925, 'Appointments', p. 453; 'Legislative Council', p. 481; *Ibid.*, 1926, 'Executive Council', p. 420.

⁹ NA, CO 67/247/13, *ibid.*

¹⁰ NA, CO 67/189, *Despatches*, Officer Administering the Government to the Secretary of State, Walter Long, 24 December 1918.

¹¹ Nevzat, 2005, p. 250.

Smyrna, this tragedy and oppression, will stain the brightest pages of the history of the victorious nations until the day of resurrection...¹²

In the following period, a rift emerged within Turkish-Cypriot politics between the traditionalist elite that aimed for the maintenance of the community as had been modelled in the Ottoman period, and in close collaboration with the British, and a party seeking to reform the community along national, that is, Turkish, lines. The conflict could be traced back to the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, and would become ever more vividly manifested.¹³

In September 1920, *Doğru Yol* described the Treaty of Sèvres, signed in August, as incompatible with the honour of nationalists.¹⁴ Under the treaty, the Ottoman Empire recognized the annexation of Cyprus by Britain in 1914 and renounced all rights and claims over the island. Ottoman privileges included the tribute that had been formerly paid to the sultan, as well as all rights of sovereignty and jurisdiction over the Muslim population of the island. Furthermore, the treaty provided that Turkish nationals born or resident in Cyprus would lose their Turkish citizenship and acquire British citizenship, while it was stated that no power could be exercised by any Turkish authority in any territory that had been detached from Turkey.

Two years later, in late 1922, Eyoub Bey, member of the Legislative Council since 1913, published a series of petitions to publicize the claim for the maintenance of Cyprus' status quo, opposition to enosis and aspirations for union with Turkey. Eyoub Bey claimed to have collected signatures from all over the island:

We the Moslem inhabitants of ... Cyprus respectfully and earnestly beg that our ... national claims ... may be taken into consideration in the Peace Conference: ... We ... beg that, in the settlement of the fate of Cyprus..., should the restoration of Cyprus to Turkey, which is our national desire..., be impossible for any political reason, the Island may be restored to its pre-war status and that without the consent of the Turkish Government and of the Moslem people of the Island, it may not be handed over to any Government excepting Turkey.¹⁵

¹² Cited in Nevzat, 2005, pp. 261.262, *Doğru Yol*, 26 March 1920.

¹³ For the influence of the Young Turk Revolution on the Turkish-Cypriot community and the political developments until the end of the First World War, see Nevzat, 2005, pp. 168-255.

¹⁴ Nevzat, 2005, p. 260.

¹⁵ CSA, SA1/1273/1922, *Union of Cyprus with Turkey. Applications by Moslems for-*, petitions.

The petitions further asked that all pre-war rights of the Muslim community be maintained, and that its 'attachment to the glorious Caliphate from religious, racial, linguistic and educational standpoint ... continue to remain free from any interference'. The petitions also called for the establishment of a Muslim Council, which would be recognized by the government as a legal body, to administer the Sharia courts, the Evkaf and the community's educational affairs. Eyoub accompanied his petitions with a memorandum to High Commissioner Sir Malcolm Stevenson and the Secretary of State, the Duke of Devonshire. There, he stressed that the community had been satisfied with the British administration in regards to the protection of life and property, however, 'the original master of the island' was the 'national government of Turkey', to which it should be restored. He also asked for the reform of the social, national and religious institutions of the community, and their re-establishment along modern lines.¹⁶

As indicated in the discourse and claims of the petition movement, part of the Turkish-Cypriot elite attempted to put forward a new conceptualization of the political, social and cultural formation of the Turkish-Cypriot community, along Turkish lines. After the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, a new Turkish-Cypriot political elite – soon to be followed by a growing part of the community – started referring to the nation as its motherland. The Treaty of Lausanne clearly demonstrated that Cyprus lay outside the political space of the Turkish nation, and recognized the island's annexation by Britain. In January 1924, the newspaper *Birlik* [Unity] stated: 'Unfortunately the Lausanne Treaty, which for Turkey is equivalent to recognition of its liberation, has cut off our beautiful island and separated it from the Turkish motherland'.¹⁷

Nevertheless, article 21 of the Treaty provided that Turkish-Cypriots had the right to opt for Turkish nationality within two years from the coming into force of the treaty, provided that they would leave Cyprus within 12 months after having so chosen. In 1925, the Turkish government established a Turkish consulate on the island, the principal task of which was to inform Turkish-Cypriots on the opportunities that awaited them in Anatolia.¹⁸ By mid-1928, about 5000 Turkish-Cypriots had emigrated to Turkey, alarming the British authorities. The British dreaded the possibility of a shift in the island's demographic equilibrium, on which their administrative pattern was based to a great extent. Although many Turkish-Cypriots returned to

¹⁶ Ibid., Eyoub's memorandum to the High Commissioner and the Secretary of State, 11 December 1922.

¹⁷ Cited in Nevzat, 2005, pp. 268-269, *Birlik*, 4 January 1924.

¹⁸ See Georghallides, 1979, pp. 407-420.

Cyprus in the following years due to economic difficulties in Anatolia, emigration continued until the late 1930s, due to the economic hardship in Cyprus and the continuous encouragement by the Turkish consulate and part of the local press.¹⁹ Certainly, the emigration movement signified the growing attraction of Kemalist Turkey to the Turkish-Cypriot community.

Kemalism was very differently perceived in Cyprus, however, than in Turkey, as would be demonstrated already during the second half of the 1920s. Most importantly, the Turkish-Cypriot Kemalist intelligentsia, faced with the ever more dynamic demand of the Greek-Cypriots for enosis, developed an irredentist discourse, asking for the restoration of Cyprus to Turkey in case of any change of its status quo, although the island lay outside the borders defined in January 1920 by the National Pact.²⁰ Furthermore, faced with government's firm cooperation with the traditionalist Turkish-Cypriot elite, Turkish-Cypriot Kemalist nationalists adopted a realistic approach to religious institutions. In direct contradiction with the Kemalist principle of secularism, they called for the maintenance of the Muftiship, a religious institution *par excellence*, which they sought to keep away from the traditionalist elite's reach. In the following period, the modernists would constantly call for the internal reorganization of the community along modern lines. Their demands led to a conflict with the traditionalist pro-British elite, which would culminate towards the end of the 1920s and continue until at least the late 1940s. The outcome of the conflict would be foreshadowed as early as 1930, with the prevalence of the Kemalist modernists in the October elections for the Legislative Council.

¹⁹ The Turkish Consulate was the main means of Turkey's intervention in Turkish-Cypriot politics, which, however, was not particularly active. As it appears, Asaf Bey, the first Turkish Consul, played a role in encouraging the Kemalist nationalist trend within the community and, in 1930, he supported the electoral campaign of the modernists. NA, CO 67/258/39913, *Immigration of Polish Jews to Cyprus*, Henniker Heaton to the Turkish Consul, 30 October 1934; NA, CO 67/281/14, *Position of the Moslem community*, Governor Palmer to Secretary of State Ormsby-Gore, 17 November 1937; NA, CO 67/290/3, *Departure from the Colony of Natives of the Colony (Regulation) Law*, Governor Palmer to Secretary of State MacDonald, 24 February 1939.

²⁰ The National Pact was the total of six resolutions issued during the last session of the Ottoman parliament in January 1920. Among others, the resolutions provided that the territories not under occupation at the signing of the Armistice of Mudros in October 1918 would form the indivisible homeland of the non-Arab Ottoman Muslims (the area to be called Turkey after 1923), and that the future of the occupied Ottoman territories of the former Russian provinces of Kars, Arhaden and Batumi and of Western Thrace would be decided by plebiscite.

3.2 Government Intervention in Communal Affairs and the Emergence of a New Political Dynamics

The change in the legal status of Cyprus with its official declaration as a Crown Colony in 1925 signalled a shift in the government's administrative policy. The change affected both communities, but had a greater impact on Turkish-Cypriots. During the second half of the 1920s, a series of reforms were introduced concerning the communal affairs of the Turkish-Cypriot community. The autonomy of the community was restricted and government control over communal affairs enhanced. The reaction to the reforms demonstrated the emergence of a new political dynamic within the community, which became increasingly apparent towards the end of the decade.

The case of the Sharia Courts

In 1927, within the context of reorganization of the judicial system, the government enacted a new Courts of Justice Order, which among other stipulations defined the operational framework of the Sharia Courts. The Sharia Courts had been officially recognized in Cyprus under the 1878 Cyprus Convention. The convention had included a provision that gave to the Sharia Courts exclusive jurisdiction over religious matters that concerned the Muslim population of the island.²¹ The provision was also reaffirmed in the 1882 Courts of Justice Order, which further provided that the civil courts could summon a Sharia judge to sit as an assessor and to advise the Court on questions related to their area of jurisdiction.

Prior to the British occupation, there were seven Sharia Courts on the island: one for the town of Nicosia (under a *mullah*, or Chief Cadi) and one for each of the districts of Nicosia, Larnaca, Limassol, Famagusta, Kyrenia and Paphos.²² In 1883, the British reduced the number of courts to four: one for the town of Nicosia; one for the districts of Nicosia and Kyrenia excepting the town of Nicosia; one for the districts of Famagusta and Larnaca; and one for the districts of Limassol and Paphos.²³ The Cadi of Nicosia, whose jurisdiction was limited to the town, retained

²¹ Annex to the Convention, article 1.

²² CSA, SA1/615/1926, *Sheri Courts. Reorganisation of-*, Chief Justice's memorandum, 22 June 1926.

²³ *The Cyprus Gazette*, 1883, Law No.4, 'For regulating the limits of the jurisdiction of Mussulman Religious Tribunals in Cyprus', p. 312.

the title of Cadi of Cyprus, or Chief Cadi, apparently due to the fact that, prior to British occupation, he was also President of the highest Criminal and Civil Court on the island and of the Court of Appeal. The execution of the decisions of the Sharia Courts was regulated by the 1885 Civil Procedure Law, which did not include provision for appeal. Until Cyprus' annexation by Britain, appeals could be made to the High Religious Court in Istanbul (*Sheikh-ul Islamate*), according to Ottoman Law; after that, the operation of Sharia Courts on the island depended upon the 1882 Order alone.²⁴

Under the 1927 Order, three Sharia Courts and a Sharia Court of Appeal were established and began operating in the same year. Newly introduced rules on court procedure replaced all previous rules of Sharia Courts.²⁵ Shortly before the passing of the new rules, the Office of the Cadi of Cyprus and those of the district cadis were abolished.²⁶ The Sharia judges were thereafter to be appointed by the delegates of Evkaf, under the Governor's approval, as officials of the Evkaf department, from which they would also receive their salaries.²⁷ The Governor reserved the right to make further rules for all aspects of the regulatory framework of the Courts. He could issue an order on the practice and procedure of the Courts as well as the evidence to be admitted, the qualification of court representatives, the duties of court officers and the fees charged by the court. As the Acting Governor stated, 'the Sheri Judges will be under the control of the delegates of Evkaf but ... they will be subject to the Governor's pleasure in all respects'.²⁸ Three years later, the offices of deputy Sharia judge, clerk and messenger were also abolished. The order was slightly altered in 1949, when a new law was introduced that provided for the ability to appeal against the decisions of Sharia Courts to the Supreme Court.

The reorganization of the Sharia Courts introduced some secular concepts into their operational framework, but brought them under the Governor's complete control. The new Rules of Court and the reintroduction of the provision for a right to appeal (until 1949, still to a Sharia court) established a degree of detachment from the Muslim religious administration of justice. Certainly, respective reforms in Turkey in the same period were far more radical in separating

²⁴ CSA, SA1/615/1926, *ibid*.

²⁵ CSA, SA1/615/1926, report 'Sheri Tribunals', 16 April 1947.

²⁶ *The Cyprus Gazette*, 1927, 'Abolition of Offices', p. 666.

²⁷ CSA, SA1/1462/28/1, *Mussulman Religious Tribunals. Proposed abolition of-*, Attorney General's minute, 8 November 1929.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Acting Governor to the Secretary of State, 18 December 1929.

religion from the justice system. Sharia Courts in Turkey were abolished in 1924, putting an end to the legal dualism existing since the mid-nineteenth century. Two years later, Turkey adopted a modified version of the 1912 Swiss Civil Code, introducing the large-scale secularization of civil law and putting an end to many Islamic practices. By 1930, the entire legal system had been completely secularized.²⁹ In Cyprus, as in all British colonies, the introduction of judicial reforms was driven by the needs of effective administration and control over communal affairs. The colonial authorities in Cyprus felt that they could not achieve these objectives if they dissatisfied their allies among the traditional Turkish-Cypriot elite. This elite would be disappointed if the government gave in to the demands of the rising Kemalist forces of the community, who were asking for the complete abolition of the Sharia Courts. As William Battershill, then Colonial Secretary, stated, referring to another case of government intervention in Muslim legislation:

[T]here are serious dangers in any legislation...: (a). If such legislation is undertaken ... the old schools of Moslems may be exacerbated... (b). Such legislation may be looked upon by the new school and by the Turkish Government as playing into their hands and might be hailed by them as a victory. (c). In any case it would be contrary to the policy of this Government to take cognizance of Kemalistic laws as affecting in the slightest degree any Cypriot Moslem or Cypriot Moslem institutions or customs.³⁰

The reception of the new regulatory framework by the Turkish-Cypriot elite and the press was not uniform. All three Turkish-Cypriot members of the Legislative Council, in line with their overall policy of cooperation with the government, backed the reforms, while Münir Bey was closely associated with them, as the reorganization of the courts meant a significant increase of his power.³¹ As the Turkish delegate of Evkaf, Münir Bey could exercise a great extent of control over the Sharia judges. The end of the independence of the courts was in fact as beneficial for him as it was for the government. It seems the colonial authorities had chosen to hand the responsibility for the administration of the Sharia courts to the Evkaf Department because they relied on Münir Bey's absolute loyalty.

²⁹ Şükrü Hanioglu, *Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 158.

³⁰ CSA, SA1/428/35/1, *Moslem marriage and Divorce Bill*, minutes, 1 December 1936.

³¹ See CSA, SA1/615/1926, memorandum by the Turkish-Cypriot members of the Legislative Council to Governor Sir Malcolm Stevenson, 25 May 1926; CSA, SA1/1462/28/1, Acting Governor to the Secretary of State, 18 December 1929.

Notably, most Turkish-Cypriot newspapers were also in favour of the reforms. Even those associated with or published by the Kemalist intelligentsia supported them, mainly due to their tentatively secularizing and modernizing character. Many articles referred directly to current events in Turkey, stressing the ties of the Turkish-Cypriot community with the country, and extensively discussed the Kemalist reforms of the judicial system, which were presented as a model for the Turkish-Cypriots. Shortly before the enactment of the new legislation, the newspaper *Birlik* stated:

[W]e are by race, culture and religion attached to Turkey. Since Turkey ... has completely adopted western civilization, these ties and connections ... could not but naturally make us amenable to principles of civilization in our personal and social affairs too... There is no reason why we should ... continue to maintain in its present state any organization from the middle ages... We shall be unable to endorse the maintenance of the Sheri Courts unless they are fundamentally reformed and amended.³²

Söz [*The Word*], the leading Kemalist newspaper on the island, emphatically campaigned for the abolition of the Sharia Courts and the adoption of the Swiss Civil Code in Cyprus as well:

We, the Turks of Cyprus, ... are attached, by acquaintance and culture, to Turkey.... Consequently when the local Government seeks to obtain the views and opinion of the proper persons regarding the Sheri Courts, the latter will point out the analogous institutions that have been brought into existence by the Turkish Republic, and they will thereby further strengthen our present social ties with the mother country... The Sheri Courts should be entirely abolished and a new organization such as would adopt the social parts of the [Swiss] Civil Code should be set up in their lieu...³³

Similar views were expressed by Mehmet Houloussi, a district judge who also militated for the abolition of the Sharia Courts and the transfer of their jurisdiction to modern courts.³⁴ Nevertheless, the Kemalist intelligentsia generally saw the reforms as a first step towards a separation of the secular affairs of the community from religion, part of a process that could eventually achieve the modernization of the community along Kemalist lines. The vivacity of the

³² CSA, SA1/615/1926, *Birlik*, leading article, 12 February 1927. See also 'How the Sharia Courts should be reformed', 29 January 1927; 'In what way should the Sharia Courts be reformed?', 19 February 1927; *Doğru Yol*, 'Is there any reason for the existence of the Sharia Courts?', 25 January 1926; 'Is there any remedy for the abolition of the Sharia Courts?', 8 February 1926; *Söz*, 'We are in difficulty and we invite the attention of the Local Government!', 12 February 1926.

³³ CSA, SA1/615/1926, *Söz*, leading article, 19 February 1927. *Söz* constituted the main locus of expression of early Kemalism in Cyprus and occasionally received financial assistance directly from Turkey.

³⁴ CSA, SA1/1462/28/1, Mehmet Houloussi to Governor Storrs, 25 March 1930.

debate in the press and the persistent calls for modernizing reforms caused the reaction of Sharia Judge Fuad Bey, who denounced *Söz* and ruled out any possibility of abolition of the Sharia Courts, as demanded by “nationalists” or extremists in Cyprus ... wishing to follow in [Kemal Pasha’s] footsteps’.³⁵ A week later, Mufti Mehmet Ziyaeddin – whose office was next to be abolished – also denounced such publications and called for the Governor to take measures against them.³⁶

The conflict between the traditionalist Turkish-Cypriot elite and the modernists regarding secular reforms continued during the following years. In 1929, the Kemalist advocate Rizat Bey stressed that the existing Muslim Inheritance Law did not provide for equal rights between both sexes and asked for its abolition.³⁷ By contrast, Fuad Bey defended the inferior legal status reserved for women in the Muslim law, and argued in favour of the existing social etiquette. After the 1930 elections, which were marked by the success of the Kemalist modernists, the reform of the Inheritance and Wills legislation on modern principles was also raised in the Legislative Council.³⁸ In 1934, Ahmed Said, who had served in the Legislative Council and had been selected Mufti by the Turkish National Congress of Cyprus, stated that the Qur’an and *hadiths* (the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad) permitted the enactment of modern family legislation in line with changing times. Three months later, the *ulema* came out in opposition to all demands for reform of the legislation dealing with marriage, divorce, inheritance, succession and wills and for protection of women’s rights. The *ulema* favoured instead the maintenance of the existing legislative framework.³⁹

Subsequently, two drafts for a Family Bill and a Wills and Succession Bill were submitted to the government by Zekia Bey, member of the Advisory Council. His drafts provided for the fundamental reform of religious law and existing Cypriot legislation along secular and modern principles. The government, unwilling to intervene in issues of Sacred Law without the consent of the *ulema*, rejected Zekia’s proposals. The Muslim Marriage and Divorce

³⁵ Ibid., Fuad Bey to the Chief Justice, 12 February 1929. Emphasis in the original.

³⁶ CSA, SA1/615/1926, Mufti to Governor Storrs, 19 February 1927.

³⁷ CSA, SA1/650/1929, *Sheri Law and Mohameddan (Inheritance) Law*, Rizat to the Colonial Secretary, 18 February 1929.

³⁸ Ibid., memorandum of the Turkish-Cypriot deputies to the Under-Secretary of State, 1930; Zekia Bey to Governor Stubbs, 9 March 1933.

³⁹ CSA, SA1/607/34, *The Moslem Family Bill and the Wills and succession Bill, Submission of by Zekia Bey*, extracts from articles in *Söz*, 3 March 1934; Nicosia Commissioner to the Colonial Secretary, 14 March 1934; despatch to Governor Palmer by members of the *ulema*, 16 March 1934.

Registration Bill, issued in 1939, followed the suggestions of an appointed committee that had been chaired by the Attorney General and consisted of four Turkish-Cypriot members, all belonging to the traditionalist elite.⁴⁰ Although government officials themselves recognized the need to remove some egregiously anachronistic provisions of Muslim law, such as for polygamy, the provisions in the bills marked no significant change in the previous legislative framework and remained in accordance with Muslim tradition.

The reform was met with satisfaction by the traditionalist elite and was conversely strongly criticized by the modernists, as well as a great part of Turkish-Cypriot youth. Criticisms of the law appeared in many Turkish-Cypriot newspapers, such as *Vakıf* [*Time*] and *Söz*, but also in the Greek-Cypriot newspaper *Embros*. The Cypriot press stressed the need for modernization and the protection of women's rights, and called for the adoption of related provisions from the Swiss or the Turkish Civil Code.⁴¹ In the face of the reaction of Turkish-Cypriot public opinion, the government did not enact the Marriage and Divorce Bill, while a new Inheritance Law was introduced in the mid-1940s, to the satisfaction of the modernists.⁴² Finally, in 1950, the government adopted their suggestions and passed new family legislation dealing with questions of marriage and divorce, which followed almost entirely the legislation in force in Turkey. At that point, the colonial authorities regarded the issue as an opportunity to cooperate with the modernists, in the face of the intensified attempts of the Greek-Cypriot leadership for union with Greece.⁴³

The Case of the Muftiship

⁴⁰ CSA, SA1/428/35/1, committee's report, 10 November 1938.

⁴¹ Ibid., despatch by Vedat Dervish, Barrister at Law, to *Embros*, 28 January 1939; extract from Press Officer's report, 11 February 1939; articles of Zekia Bey in *Embros*, 17-19 and 22-23 March 1939.

⁴² See CSA, SA1/428/35/2, *Moslem Marriage and Divorce Bill*, despatches by the General Secretary of the Turkish Cypriot National Union Party to the Colonial Secretary, 22 October 1944 and 23 December 1945; Executive Council minutes, 29 March 1946; despatch by the Secretary of the Federation of Turkish Cypriot Associations to the Colonial Secretary, 2 January 1946; *Söz*, 'Religious Law and relations between the Religion and the Law', 4 October 1944; 'The Marriage and Divorce Law criticized', 9 October 1944; 'The Muslim Marriage and Divorce Registration Law', 14 October 1944; *Halkın Sesi* [*People's Voice*], 'The Muslim Marriage and Divorce Registration Law', 14 October 1944.

⁴³ NA, CO 67/373/6, *Law to make provision for marriage and divorce involving the Turkish moslem community of Cyprus*, Governor Wright to Secretary of State Jim Griffiths, 9 May 1950.

In November 1928, Münir Bey and the British delegate of the Evkaf suggested to the Colonial Secretary the abolition of the post of the Mufti of Cyprus.⁴⁴ As in the case of the Evkaf and the Sharia Courts, the Muftiship was an institution that had been maintained after British occupation. The Mufti, interpreter of the Qur'an and of the sayings of the Prophet, and responsible for issuing *fetwas* [religious decrees], was elected by the *ulema*, and his appointment was confirmed by the Ottoman authorities.⁴⁵ After the British occupation, the role of the Mufti, as well as those of the Muslim clergy in general, underwent a process of redefinition, gradually acquiring more responsibilities than those deriving from simply his religious capacity. His participation in local politics became much more direct than merely communicating the political concerns of the Muslim community to the Porte.

In the opinion of the Evkaf delegates and the government, there were significant reasons for abolishing the Mufti's office. Most significantly, they feared that the modernist Kemalist intelligentsia was looking for a personality to guide 'their unlawful acts', so they had attempted to turn the Mufti into the leader of the Turkish-Cypriot community and to attach to his office role similar to that of the head of the Orthodox Church. Against the wishes of the modernists, it was further deemed necessary that the Mufti should lose his role in Evkaf matters or any other matters of the community - his sole duty should be to issue *fetwas*. The overall objective of the government and Münir Bey was to place all communal institutions, especially the Muftiship, which was potentially the most dangerous among them, under the Evkaf Department. In January 1929, the department was declared a government organ. Münir Bey's fervent call to place the Mufti under the control of his department should not be interpreted as an attempt to merely increase his own power. It should be considered an attempt to secure his own authority from an opponent who could challenge it, especially if allied with the modernists. The concentration of all previously autonomous Muslim posts under the Evkaf department, which became the exclusive authority regulating all Turkish-Cypriot affairs, would secure the maintenance of the current balance of power within the community.

⁴⁴ CSA, SA1/1469/1926/2, *Evkaf Department. Status of-*, report 'The abolition of the Muftiship', 1928.

⁴⁵ Rebecca Bryant notes that it is unclear if the Mufti was always elected by the *ulema*, or if local Cypriot practice had by tradition come closer to that of the Orthodox Christian community in adopting a popular electoral process with the participation of the laity. Bryant, 2004, p. 31.

The case of the Muftiship constituted a major point in the conflict between the traditionalist elite and the Kemalist modernists during the late 1920s. The issue would continue up to the mid-1950s, polarizing the entire community. The very fact that the modernists sought to secure this traditional religious institution is particularly significant and indicative of the adaptation of Kemalist ideology and principles to the Turkish-Cypriot context. Given that the elections for the Legislative Council were determined by the practice of patronage and clientalism, and the economic dependency of the population on the traditionalist elite, the modernists demanded the participation of the public in the election of the Mufti, pushing for more representative politics. In fact, they were attempting to appropriate the role the Mufti had been playing outside his religious capacity, namely, to politicize his authority. The Mufti had been acting as the spiritual head of the community, and the protector of its autonomy. Notably, Ziyaeddin, who remained in office until 1927, and the other muftis of the period were ardent anti-Kemalists. The modernists, nevertheless, regarded the autonomy of the Muftiship and all other communal institutions from the government as a precondition for gradually bringing them under their own control, and therefore prevailing within the community.

Less than two months after the Evkaf delegates' proposal for the abolition of the Muftiship, the office was indeed abolished.⁴⁶ The Mufti's duties were henceforth carried out by the *Fetva Emini* [Officer of Fetwas], an official attached to the Evkaf Department, whose appointment rested with the delegates.⁴⁷ The first holder of the new office, Hakki Bey, was Münir Bey's brother in law.⁴⁸ The modernists strongly criticized the government and called for the reestablishment of the Muftiship. That demand would be frequently raised during the next two decades, as part of their broader conflict with the colonial authorities and the traditionalist elite for control over the communal institutions.

In the elections for the Legislative Council in late 1930, the abolition of the Muftiship and the office of the Cadi became one of the main subjects of public debate. The measure was strongly criticized by the Kemalist press, the candidates of the modernists and the Kemalist

⁴⁶ *The Cyprus Gazette*, 1929, 'Abolition of Office', p. 35.

⁴⁷ CSA, SA1/1469/1926/2, report by Münir 'on the system adopted in Cyprus for dealing with the administration of Vakf estates'.

⁴⁸ Altay Nevzat, 'Securing the Office of *Müftü*: Nationalism, Religion and the Turks of Cyprus', in Ayhan Aktar, Niyazi Kızılyürek and Umut Özkirimli (eds.), *Nationalism in the troubled triangle: Cyprus, Greece and Turkey* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 164.

intelligentsia.⁴⁹ Münir Bey, who was running for the council seat of Nicosia, was personally attacked for his collaboration with the government by Necati Bey, the most prominent figure of the modernist camp, who was running against him. Necati Bey campaigned on making all communal institutions independent from government control. In the wake of Necati Bey's victory, he began to raise the issue of the reestablishment of the office of the Mufti and his election by popular vote.⁵⁰ Petitions and memoranda to that purpose were submitted to the colonial authorities, and a few months later Necati Bey convened the Turkish National Congress of Cyprus. The congress elected Ahmed Said as the new Mufti, an act that was not recognized by local authorities.⁵¹ In 1933, Said called again for the reestablishment of the office and, in response to the Evkaf delegates, he stressed the importance of the Mufti's duties for the community. Said presented the authorities with a full list: to approve or reject applications of persons to become *imams* [Muslim priests] and *hatips* [predicators of mosques]; to give permission for the performance of rites in mosques; to determine the dates of Ramazan, Bayram, and other religious festivities; to prepare bills on family and inheritance legislative questions; to supervise the religious preachers; and to act as a permanent member of the Muslim Board of Education and as official advisor of the government on religious questions.⁵²

Governor Palmer and the colonial authorities refused to address these concerns. After Palmer's term had ended in 1939, however, and especially after the modernists won the 1943 municipal elections, the question was again raised. The modernists, mainly through the Kıbrıs Türk Milli Birlik Partisi [Turkish Cypriot National Union Party – KTMBP], which was founded in 1944, and the Kemalist press, constantly asked for the reestablishment of the Muftiship and the popular election of the Mufti.⁵³ Eventually, under pressure from the new leadership of the community, whose cooperation was now vital, the government accepted a compromise solution.

⁴⁹ CSA, SA1/815/30, *Conference of Moslems on 27 April 1930 on Sheri Courts and Education questions*, minutes of the Sharia Courts Committee, 14-15/6 and 12/13 July 1930. CSA, SA1/1576/1929/1, Nicosia Commandant of Police to the Chief Commandant, 17 September 1930.

⁵⁰ CSA, SA1/815/30, Zekia Bey's report, 21 October 1930.

⁵¹ NA, FCO 141/2428, *Cyprus. Proposed abolition of post of Mufti of Cyprus*, minute, 2 October 1944; CSA, SA1/815/30, memoranda and petitions to the government, late 1930.

⁵² NA, FCO 141/2428, Ahmed Said to Governor Stubbs, 21 February 1933.

⁵³ See CSA, SA1/700/1949, *Turkish Communal Affairs*, J. Rifat, editor of the banned newspaper *Masum Millet (The Innocent Nation)* to the Colonial Secretary, 31 January 1947; memoranda by J. Rifat, 6 and 8 February 1949; NA, CO 67/368/1, *Turks in Cyprus. Reports. Correspondence on the Mufti*, Governor Wright to Secretary of State Griffiths, 8 March 1950; extract from *Hür Söz (Free Word)*, 12 July 1950; extract from *İstiklal (Independence)*, 12 July 1950.

In 1950, the Muftiship was re-established, with the new Mufti appointed by the Governor and barred from participation in any political activities.⁵⁴

Overall, the government had sought to prevent the emergence of the Mufti as national leader of the Turkish-Cypriot community. The British feared that the Mufti would gain a prestige and authority analogous to that of the Orthodox Archbishop, who was considered personally responsible for the organization of the enosis plebiscite in January of 1950.⁵⁵ The evolution of the Mufti on the ethnarchic model would enhance further nationalist politics within the community, and would significantly reinforce the influence of the modernists, who had only recently come to a fragile consensus with the government. In a period when Turkish-Cypriot nationalism was becoming ever more radical and the calls for Turkey's intervention were intensified, limiting the Mufti to his religious duties was considered imperative. In 1951, after receiving reports that the demand for an elected Mufti was universal within the community, the government was forced to adopt the demand under pressure from the Turkish-Cypriot leadership. The British agreed to the public election of the Mufti, who was still required to abstain from politics.⁵⁶ After a period of heated debate among all the involved parties – the government, the modernist leadership, the few leading figures remaining in the traditionalist camp and the Turkish government – a new Mufti, supported by the modernists, was finally elected at the end of 1953.⁵⁷

The Administration of the Evkaf

In late 1928, the government passed the Evkaf (Muslim Religious Property Administration) Order in Council, redefining the administrative framework of the evkaf, as had been set by the Cyprus Convention of 1878. The convention stipulated that the administration of the evkaf would be carried out by a British and a Turkish delegate, appointed by the British and Ottoman authorities respectively; after the annexation of Cyprus by Britain, both delegates were to be

⁵⁴ NA, CO 67/368/1, Governor to the British Ambassador in Turkey, 16 May 1950; Governor's memorandum, 23 May 1950.

⁵⁵ NA, FO 371/88007, *Proposal to re-establish the office of Mufti in Cyprus*, Governor to the Colonial Office, 21 June 1950.

⁵⁶ NA, FCO 141/4131, *administration of Evcaf*, minutes of Commissioners Conference, 10 November 1951.

⁵⁷ For an analysis of the confrontation on the election of the Mufti, see Nevzat, 2010, pp. 160-174, here pp. 166-170.

appointed by the High Commissioner. The evkaf foundations had immense economic significance for the Turkish-Cypriot community, as well as for the economy of the island as a whole. The Evkaf administered all property that had been appropriated or endowed for charitable and religious purposes, including landed and monetary property that belonged to mosques, cemeteries, Muslim schools and other religious establishments. The evkaf of Cyprus were divided into two main categories: a) the *mazbuta evkaf*, which included evkaf endowed by the sultans, property acquired by the delegates out of *mazbuta* funds and money formerly sent to Istanbul, and *Escheats* (a special category of *mazbuta evkaf*), were under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Evkaf during the Ottoman period and were now directly administered by the delegates; b) the *mulhaka evkaf*, which included property that had been endowed for religious or charitable purposes, and were administered by the heirs of the donor, who retained the surplus of its income after those duties were fulfilled. There was also the small Jelalié Privileged Vakf [singular form of Evkaf], dedicated to the benefit of the sect of Mevlevi dervishes.⁵⁸ Under the 1928 Order, all *mazbuta* and *mulhaka* evkaf funds were to be either directly administered or directed and superintended by the delegates; in 1933, they also acquired jurisdiction over the Jelalié Privileged Vakf.

The most important provision of the order was to turn the Department of the Evkaf into a government department. The delegates passed under the direction of the Governor and the Evkaf accounts became subject to government audit. Having already imposed its control on two fundamental communal institutions, the Sharia Courts and the Muftiship, the government would also control the most prosperous foundation of the community. At the same time, by placing these communal institutions under the department of the Evkaf, the British turned it into the most powerful institution within the Turkish-Cypriot community. Given that the Turkish delegate, Münir Bey, was perfectly loyal to the British colonial authorities and that the department was now a governmental one, control over communal institutions was almost absolute. The British were about to bring the last domain of communal autonomy, education, also under their control.

⁵⁸ CSA, SA1/1469/1926/2, report by the Turkish delegate of Evkaf, 25 October 1937; CSA, SA1/439/1922, *Reports on the administration and financial position of the Cyprus Evqaf*, statement enclosed in High Commissioner Malcolm Stevenson's despatch to the High Commissioner of Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, 20 January 1922.

Reaction to the reform was evident from its very inception.⁵⁹ Encapsulating all claims that would be put forward by the modernist camp over the following decades, the main protest raised was against placing the Evkaf Department under government jurisdiction. In March 1927, Söğ claimed that the Evkaf property belonged to and should be exclusively administered by the 'Turkish community' and emphasized that it should be kept away from politics.⁶⁰ The very participation of the Evkaf Department in politics, however, was seen as absolutely necessary by the government. In 1937, Governor Palmer advanced £5,000 to the department as a free from interest loan, while a year later he asked the Colonial Office to authorize further financial support. Palmer stressed the critical role of the department for the political life of the Turkish-Cypriot community, and contended that it was the duty of the government to support its activities.⁶¹ Palmer stressed that the Evkaf Department and its committees were the main channels of influence of the traditionalist Turkish-Cypriot elite within the community, and that influence was rapidly declining due to the appeal of the Kemalist nationalists. The Governor further highlighted the support that Kemalism and Turkish-Cypriot nationalism received from the Turkish consulate on Cyprus, and linked their opposition to the traditionalist elite to anti-British agitation.⁶² Assisting the Evkaf against its opponents and strengthening its position within the community was thus deemed necessary for the maintenance of order in the colony and securing Turkish-Cypriot loyalty to the government. In the Governor's words, 'a Government Department ... can perform as an instrument for the maintenance of the goodwill of Moslems towards the British Administration'. Finally, Palmer emphasized that the traditionalist Turkish-Cypriot cooperation with the colonial administration was being challenged within the community, and that Turkish- and Greek-Cypriot nationalists were joining forces in opposition to the colonial government.

The question of the administration of Evkaf property would be persistently raised by the modernists in the following years. The modernists demanded that the administration of the property be assigned to a body elected by the community, and that the department detach itself

⁵⁹ The question of the Evkaf Department's control by the government had also been raised in 1924, when the newly formed *Cyprus Muslim Association* had suggested that the department be administered by an elective committee. McHenry, 1987, p. 125.

⁶⁰ Söğ, 'The Evkaf, the Government and the Turkish Community', 26 March 1927; 'Evkaf's reform', 2 April 1927.

⁶¹ NA, FCO 141/2595, *restriction on activities of Evcaf*, Governor to Secretary of State MacDonald, 30 December 1938; NA, CO 67/301/9, *Financial position of the Evcaf Department*, minutes, January 1939.

⁶² See NA, CO 67/262/2, *Political activities of the Greek and Turkish consuls in Cyprus*, 1935.

from politics. Notably, the modernists held very similar demands to the secular Greek-Cypriot elite, which pushed for its participation in the administration and finances of the Orthodox Church on the island. Nevertheless, for almost a decade after 1928, when the order was first enacted, the two groups did not coordinate their activities in this regard. Some moves for cooperation appeared in 1937, when attempts were made to found bi-communal political societies, aiming to coordinate common action against the authoritarian regime imposed after the 1931 revolt. The government refused to grant permission for the foundation of such societies, yet one of the demands that the modernists were planning to promote was the termination of government control on the administration of the Evkaf. In the following period the demands for secular and popular control would be promoted without any bi-communal coordination, itself a telling sign of incipient fracture.

Educational Affairs

By the end of the 1920s, government intervention in the last autonomous domain of communal affairs would complete its control over communal institutions. Regulation over educational affairs was mainly imposed by directly subjecting part of the administrative framework to the Governor, and by controlling the two Boards of Education. In this, government intervention was equally definite for both communities, and resulted in a degree of coordination against the colonial authorities. Education was considered the main conduit capable of cultivating pro-British sentiments in the local population. For the government, this made the de-nationalization of education imperative; for the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots, it was seen as an arbitrary attempt to Anglicize education. The autonomy of education would be claimed by both the Turkish-Cypriot modernist elite and the Greek-Cypriot leadership until the end of colonial rule.

In late 1929, the government enacted the new Elementary Education Law. As in the case of the Greek-Cypriot community, the law stipulated that the six members who had been elected by the district committees would then be appointed by the Governor. The Governor would also be responsible for the appointment, promotion and dismissal of teachers, while the Boards of Education retained their right to prescribe the curricula and choose the textbooks. Of course, the

board, composed as it was by the director of education, the colonial secretary and the delegates of the Evkaf, was already under the full control of the government.⁶³

Government oversight of educational affairs became increasingly evident from the beginning of the 1920s. Soon after the introduction of the 1921 Elementary Education Law, the colonial administration censored the material used in Muslim schools. Turkish-Cypriots received their educational materials from the Ottoman Ministry of Education, and to some extent it promoted irredentist feelings. In extracts selected from such textbooks, students were called to identify with the Turkish motherland and be prepared to make sacrifices and study the art of warfare. The books reported on injustice against the Turks, and specifically mentioned the territories that the Turkish nation had lost and needed to regain. In July 1921, the Acting Chief Secretary instructed the Chief Inspector of Schools to redact all related passages, inciting the reaction of Eyoub Bey.⁶⁴ From then on, issues concerning educational affairs would be closely related to the claim for communal autonomy. As early as 1922, Eyoub Bey had included the formation of a Muslim Council to be given charge of education in the lists of demands in his petitions. In 1930, the Turkish National Congress of Cyprus, formed after the modernists' success in the 1930 elections, also included the autonomy of the communal education system in its demands. A year later, Söğ stressed: 'For us, a national education system is necessary before everything. This truth we will seek in the motherland, in the great Turkish spirit. An educational system will come from Turkey'.⁶⁵

Notably, the government was rather more tolerant in regards to the academic curriculum than it was in educational administrative affairs. From 1930 onwards, Turkish-Cypriot education was based on the new Turkish curricula, and secular subjects, such as philosophy, sociology, psychology and civics, replaced religious indoctrination. The curriculum remained the same even after the introduction of more repressive measures on education, in the aftermath of the 1931 revolt. At the same time, special arrangements with the Turkish government provided for the admittance of Turkish-Cypriot secondary school graduates in Turkish universities without any

⁶³ The Turkish delegate of the Evkaf, Münir Bey, was in a few years to be also appointed as Director of Education for the Muslim community: Ktoris, 'Τουρκοκύπριοι: Από Μειονότητα σε Πολιτική Κοινότητα (1923-1960)' [Turkish-Cypriots: From Minority to Political Community (1923-1960)] (University of Cyprus D.Phil Thesis, 2011), p. 164.

⁶⁴ Nevzat, 2005, pp. 294-295.

⁶⁵ Cited in Bryant, 2004, p. 176, Söğ, 19 March 1931.

further examination.⁶⁶ The government focused on banning the importation of teachers and books from Turkey - as well as Greece - and intensified censorship on those sections of the curricula that promoted nationalist sentiment. To that end, two English-speaking training colleges were established between 1935 and 1937, for the training Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot teachers.⁶⁷ Facing similar problems, the modernist Turkish-Cypriot leadership and the Greek-Cypriot elite provided some mutual support on educational affairs against the government. This cooperation was especially evident in the period between the 1930 elections and before the 1931 revolt, when the two communities were also working together in the Legislative Council. In February 1931, *Eleftheria* stressed that the government had no right to intervene in Turkish-Cypriot education and that its policy eliminated the last traces of the community's educational autonomy.⁶⁸ The following day, *Söz* expressed gratitude for the support of *Eleftheria* and proposed the collaboration between the two communities against government policy.⁶⁹

The calls for educational reform would grow after the end of Governor Palmer's term, and especially after the end of the Second World War. In 1946, the modernists asked for the representative election of school committees. Even though the director of education himself recognized the arbitrary character of the boards of education, the government, eager to defend the position in educational affairs of the traditionalist elite, responded to the demand with intransigence.⁷⁰ Two years later, government policy would only be slightly altered, adopting a small part of the suggestions that had been submitted by the Committee on Turkish Affairs in 1948. Secondary school committees would be henceforth composed exclusively by Turkish-Cypriot members, however, they would be appointed by the government.

In the same period, the Turkish government came under increasing pressure from the pan-Turkic movement in Turkey, which had emerged during the war years, and gradually changed its policy regarding the Turkish-Cypriot community. Turkey's increased interest in the community's educational affairs was expressed directly in requests to appoint teachers, and its

⁶⁶ Nevzat, 2005, p. 434.

⁶⁷ Crouzet, 2011, p. 98.

⁶⁸ *Eleftheria*, 'The Coup', 24 February 1931.

⁶⁹ *Eleftheria*, republication from *Söz*, 'To compatriots', 25 February 1931.

⁷⁰ CSA, SA1/1573/1929, Director of Education to the Colonial Secretary, 12 October 1946; Director's minute, 26 November 1946.

economic support for Turkish-Cypriot schools.⁷¹ Moreover, Turkish officials with pan-Turkic views in the Kemalist bureaucracy sent teachers to the island to encourage anti-enosis demonstrations and promote the claim of Cyprus' union with Turkey.⁷² By the early 1950s, pressure by the Federation of Turkish Cypriot Associations, which had been founded in 1949, and an initial change of government policy led to the partial autonomy of the Turkish-Cypriot educational system. In that period, the Secretary of the Federation managed to secure funding for secondary education from Turkey through the newly founded Kıbrıs Türk Kültür Derneği [Cypriot Turkish Cultural Association], while additional funding was also received from other Turkish sources.⁷³ Turkey's participation in Turkish-Cypriot educational affairs, tolerated by the government, was maintained and intensified through to the end of colonial rule.⁷⁴

3.3 Consolidation of Modernist Politics and the Advance of Nationalism

Towards the end of the 1920s, the Kemalist modernist political trend was becoming ever more influential within the Turkish-Cypriot community, to the detriment of the traditionalist elite and the influence of the colonial authorities. This trend had been particularly evident in the Turkish-Cypriot press, but also in state institutions, such as the Legislative Council. In the following period, the gradual prevalence of modernist politicians would drastically redefine Turkish-Cypriot politics, and would carry implications for the government's overall administrative planning.

After a long period of almost absolute loyalty to the government, the cooperation of the Turkish-Cypriot deputies could no longer be taken for granted. In early 1929, Arthur Dawe, an official in the Colonial Office, observed that Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot members of the Legislative Council had recently begun to ally themselves in opposition to government measures, forcing the government to pass legislation by Orders in Council.⁷⁵ In April of the same year, the

⁷¹ NA, CO 67/342/1, *Turkish interest in the education of Turkish speaking Cypriots*, Acting Governor's note, 22 November 1948.

⁷² NA, CO 537/6235, *Reports on political situation*, report for August 1950.

⁷³ NA, CO 926/19, *Reports on political situation*, reports for December 1952 and January 1953.

⁷⁴ NA, CO 926/209, *Reports on political situation*, report for April 1954.

⁷⁵ NA, CO 67/227/4, Arthur Dawe's memorandum, 23 April 1929.

idea of abolishing the constitution and forming an appointed Legislative Council, so as to surpass this difficulty was brought forward by the Acting Governor, yet it was eventually rejected.

From the mid-1920s until the end of the Second World War, the government's position regarding the developments within the Turkish-Cypriot community resulted in a twofold policy: the imposition of restrictions on communal autonomy and the continued patronage of the traditionalist elite. Few deviations from this policy can be observed during this period. Maybe the most important one was the adoption of the new Turkish alphabet in the documentation of all administrative sectors. From 1930, all Turkish legislative texts were printed in Latin characters, and from 1932, the same applied to all official communications emanating from government departments.⁷⁶ Special instruction was given to all Turkish-Cypriot government officials and clerks, and a grant was given to the Education Department for the cultivation of teaching the new characters in schools.⁷⁷ The introduction of the new alphabet was met with satisfaction by the modernist Turkish-Cypriot leadership and the Kemalist press.

At the elections for the legislative council in October 1930, the influence of the modernist Kemalist intelligentsia became clearly evident. The elections were marked by the candidate of the modernists, Necati Bey, and his defeat of the most prominent figure of the traditionalist pro-government elite, Münir Bey. The electoral campaign of Necati Bey encapsulated the struggle against the traditionalist elite during the previous period. The main points raised by the modernists were the concentration of powers in Münir Bey's person, secured by his multiple appointments, and the defence of the political autonomy of the community from the government.⁷⁸ Together with Necati's victory, Zekia Bey, initially supported by the modernists, replaced the traditionalist Mahmut Bey. Eyoub Bey, who had also occasionally taken political initiatives supported by the modernists, was the only member of the pro-government camp to be re-elected to the Council.

⁷⁶ CSA, SA1/1320/1928, *Turkish alphabet expressed in Latin characters*, 'New Turkish Characters'; *The Cyprus Gazette*, 1930, 'New Turkish Characters', p. 324.

⁷⁷ CSA, SA1/1320/1928, Nicosia Commissioner to the Colonial Secretary, 23 December 1931.

⁷⁸ Münir Bey's eligibility to be appointed at the Executive Council and to stand as a candidate for the Legislative Council was disputed, and his multiple appointments, mainly his position as Evkaf delegate, severely criticized. *Söz*, 'Necati Bey and the elections', 2 October 1930; NA, CO 67/235/13, *Appointments held by Münir Bey*, despatch by Ahmed Said, ex member of the Legislative Council and candidate for the 1930 elections, 14 June 1930; NA, FCO 141/2423, *eligibility of the Director and Turkish Delegate of Evkaf to be appointed an additional member of the Executive Council*.

The result of the elections was characterized by the Kemalist press as a victory of the people and as a revolution similar to the foundation of the Turkish Republic, the anniversary of which Söğ proposed should be celebrated every year. Immediately after the elections, the Turkish-Cypriot deputies issued a memorandum that codified the claims of the new leadership of the community.⁷⁹ First, the memorandum denounced the renewed calls for enosis that had been issued by the Bishop of Kition after his own election. The Turkish-Cypriot deputies declared their opposition also to self-government and stressed that Greek-Cypriots were disproportionately employed in the higher posts of the public service. Most significantly, the memorandum declared that the new Turkish-Cypriot leadership was willing to continue the policy of cooperation with the government that had been employed by the previous leadership. As it appears, in the face of the continuous and ever louder calls for enosis from the Greek-Cypriots, the new leadership wanted to avoid losing government support against Greek-Cypriot nationalism and against any increase in the influence of that community. Nonetheless, the collaboration between Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot members of the Legislative Council on matters of common interest would soon prove increasingly threatening to the government's ability to pass legislation. The rest of the memorandum dealt with the main questions that had preoccupied the community throughout the previous period. The deputies requested that the Muftiship be re-established, that the government pay the salaries of the Sharia judges, and that a committee be formed to reform the Sharia courts according to modern legal standards. The deputies also asked that the Evkaf delegates abstain from politics, and that the Evkaf estimates be prepared by a committee composed of the delegates and selected Turkish-Cypriot members of the Legislative and district councils, approved by the Governor.

Seeking to consolidate their electoral and political success, the new leadership convened the *Turkish National Congress of Cyprus* in Necati Bey's house in Nicosia, in May 1931. The Congress, composed of some 140 persons from all over the island, issued a set of resolutions addressed to the colonial authorities, also publishing them in the press.⁸⁰ The resolutions included longstanding demands of the modernists, now put forward more emphatically and decisively. Most importantly, the Congress decided to revive the Muftiship and declared Ahmed Said as Mufti and spiritual head of the Turkish community of Cyprus. The Congress asked the

⁷⁹ CSA, SA1/815/30, memorandum by the Turkish-Cypriot members of the Legislative Council, October 1930.

⁸⁰ NA, CO 67/239/14, *Political situation*, Governor Storrs to Secretary of State Lord Passfield, 4 June 1931.

government to recognize his election, affirm the Mufti's previous privileges and rights, and allow his office to operate free from government interference. It also requested that the Evkaf treasury finance the reorganization of the Muftiship, and that the Mufti's specific responsibilities be defined by law. The Congress requested that the Mufti acquire part of the authority now enjoyed by the Evkaf delegates.

Furthermore, the Congress demanded that the Mufti take responsibility for all religious functions previously exercised by the Evkaf, and that the latter be converted into an exclusively financial institution, whose revenue would be used for charitable and educational purposes for the benefit of the community. The administration of the Evkaf was to be entrusted to a new body, composed of six Turkish-Cypriot members elected by the Congress every three years, as well as one British member to be appointed by the government. The institution should be managed as a bank and be subject to new legislation, which would confirm its autonomous status.

Moreover, the Congress demanded the independence of the Sharia Courts, stressing that their autonomous status was recognized by the Treaty of Lausanne. The current situation did not inspire confidence in the community nor did it protect family rights. The Congress also requested that the operating costs of the courts should be defrayed by the Public Estimates. If this was deemed undesirable, their jurisdiction should at least be transferred to regular civil courts and be exercised by Turkish judges appointed to them. Finally, the Congress emphasized the inferior position of the Turkish-Cypriots' secondary education, compared to that provided to Greek-Cypriots, and asked the government to provide for independent Muslim boards of education and increase the funding for the Muslim *Lycée*.

Signs of cooperation between the Turkish- and Greek-Cypriot members of the Legislative Council had further damaged the new leadership's relations with the colonial authorities, and the government duly rejected the demands of the Congress. In mid-1931, Necati Bey voted together with his Greek-Cypriots counterparts against many government measures, such as the Customs, Excise and Revenue Bill and the Village Authorities Bill, to the detriment of the government. As Governor Storrs stated:

The attitude of the Greek members, always disagreeable and sometimes trying, has been ineffective for so long as the Government could rely on loyal Turkish cooperation. This is no longer available as the Greeks ... have been enabled to

buy or otherwise persuade a recently elected Turkish nonentity, Necati Bey, to vote with them... There is every reason to suppose that Necati Bey can be counted upon for full participation in all steps taken to embarrass the Government... It may therefore be necessary to seek recourse to Orders in Council.⁸¹

A few days later, an official of the Colonial Office stressed that, given the stance of the Turkish-Cypriot deputies, the ability of colonial administration to function efficiently depended on a new constitution, which would give the Governor complete control over legislation and the finances of the colony.⁸² A few months later, after the Governor passed the Customs, Excise and Revenue Bill through an Order in Council, the October revolt provided the government with a unique opportunity to impose an authoritarian regime in the colony. In the aftermath of the revolt, all legislative and executive powers were vested in the Governor.

The entire Turkish-Cypriot leadership took great interest in how the revolt developed, and called on the community not to get involved in any way and to comply with government orders. No serious efforts were made for cooperation with the Greek-Cypriots, as the enosis character of the revolt meant that any potential for such attempts to succeed was minimal. Ioannis Kyriakides, a veteran politician, made a similar suggestion, but it was ardently rejected by the modernists.⁸³ The militant manifestation of Greek-Cypriot nationalism throughout the revolt would in fact result, in such a moment of crisis, to a shift of the modernist leadership's stance towards reconciliation with the government. The British were then considered as a powerful ally whom the Turkish-Cypriots had to support. Addressing the community, Necati Bey stated:

The recent activities in Nicosia of our Greek compatriots ... are not directed at our community but are events which occurred between Greeks and the Government. Therefore our duty in such an excited and extraordinary time is to maintain our perfect quietness and impartiality ... and not to interfere with these activities ... and to leave the matter entirely to be dealt with by the responsible authorities... It is for the general benefit of the community to bow ... to all measures to be adopted and orders to be given by the Government... The safety of

⁸¹ NA, CO 67/239/14, *ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*, H.R. Cowell's minutes, 16 June 1931.

⁸³ Georghallides, 1985, p. 669.

the country and the peace of our community invite us to be alert and careful in every respect and to refrain from any miscalculated act.⁸⁴

Following the revolt, nationalist sentiment among both Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots kept growing throughout the 1930s despite the government's attempts to control it, and widened the gap between the two communities. At the same time, modernists gradually resumed their anti-government politics. In the following years, the growth of the influence of Kemalism, accompanied by demands for autonomous education and emigration to Turkey, worried the colonial authorities.⁸⁵ Notably, in 1937, some understanding emerged between the anti-government parties in both communities. Their cooperation took the form of common moves against the authoritarian measures imposed after the revolt. In particular, the colonial authorities received applications for the founding of local political societies. Each society would elect a 12-member committee, composed of five Turkish- and seven Greek-Cypriots.⁸⁶ According to the applications, the societies would discuss local issues as well as general political matters, such as a recent speech of the British Prime Minister and the Governor's speech to the Advisory Council. The Nicosia society included the editor of *Söz*, Remzi Okan, and Necati Bey; it proposed to put forward the termination of government control over the administration of the Evkaf, and the reintroduction of the old constitution.⁸⁷ The government rejected the applications, and a few months later suspended the publication of *Söz* and *Eleftheria*, two newspapers that had promoted the initiative.⁸⁸

In the same year, in its effort to temper the increasing discontent within the Turkish-Cypriot community, the government asked Münir Bey to visit the main Turkish-Cypriot towns to

⁸⁴ NA, CO 67/244/8, *Agitation for union of Cyprus with Greece*, 1932, Henniker Heaton to Parkinson, 27 September 1932, enclosure 'Notes on Points of Fact in the Question of Cyprus'.

⁸⁵ The question of the Turkish Lycée, which the government decided to rename as the 'Muslim Lycée' in 1937 and to which it had appointed a British headmaster, attracted particular criticism. During the annual celebrations for the bayram, young Turkish-Cypriots wore the badge or tie bearing six arrows, which represented the six principles of Kemalism. These principles (nationalism [*milliyetçilik*]; laicism/secularism [*laiklik*]; populism [*halkçılık*]; statism [*devletçilik*]; republicanism [*cumhuriyetçilik*]; and revolutionism/reformism [*devrimcilik/inkılâpçılık*]) had been codified in the 1931 Congress of the Republican People's Party and reaffirmed in its 1935 Congress as principles of the party itself. NA, CO 67/281/14, Münir Bey to the Colonial Secretary, 12 August 1937; Governor Palmer to Secretary of State Ormsby-Gore, 17 November 1937; reports on the political situation, November and December 1937.

⁸⁶ *Eleftheria*, 'Application to the Government for founding political societies', 15 June 1937; 'Application for founding of political society in Larnaca', 16 June 1937; Katsiaounis, 2000, pp. 55-56.

⁸⁷ NA, CO 67/288/6, *Agitation for union of Cyprus with Greece*, extract from Nicosia Commissioner's report for 1937.

⁸⁸ NA, CO 67/278/5, *Activities of the Cypriot Press*, 1937, Colonial Secretary's notes, 17/8 and 20 September 1937.

convince the population that the colonial authorities were addressing its concerns.⁸⁹ In his meetings with prominent figures of the community throughout the island, Münir Bey described in detail the recent coronation in London, which he had just attended, and stressed the benefits of living under the rule of a great power like Britain. In particular, he assured his audience that the question of rural debt was being carefully examined by the authorities. He also argued for the benefits of an air and naval base on the island, and promised that all questions of the community were under careful consideration. He further emphasized that political agitation of the Greek-Cypriots for autonomy and a new constitution would threaten the safety of the community, which should remain loyal to the Crown. Despite his attempts, it seems that most participants expressed their dissatisfaction with the government and repeated the demands that the modernist leadership had put forward, such as the autonomy of education and the funding of the Muslim *Lycée*.

Despite the government's attempts to quell nationalist sentiment, the movement was still growing within the community. The advance of the Kemalist modernist camp over their opponents in the traditionalist elite had caused great concern among the colonial authorities. The British had been relying on the traditionalist elite to secure Turkish-Cypriot loyalty and to counter the anti-government political forces among the Greek-Cypriots. In April 1934, the Attorney General stressed that two opposing camps had emerged among the prominent figures of the community: one that favoured confessional politics, and another arguing for secular reforms along Kemalist lines.⁹⁰ During the second half of the 1930s, Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot nationalisms continued to grow, while pro-government forces on both sides increasingly declined. This development indicated the failure on the part of the government to achieve the main objective it had set after the 1931 revolt: to make Cyprus 'a real colony'.

In mid-1938, the Governor himself admitted that Turkish-Cypriot nationalism could no longer be considered as a trend restricted to 'a small circle of journalists, politicians and their friends', but as a mass movement. Developments on the island were taking 'the form of a

⁸⁹ NA, CO 67/281/14, Münir Bey to the Colonial Secretary, 12 August 1937; Governor to the Secretary of State, 27 August 1937.

⁹⁰ CSA, SA1/650/1929, Attorney General to the Colonial Secretary, 12 April 1934.

tendency for 'enosis' and Kemalism to make common cause'.⁹¹ Nevertheless, the government continued to rely on the support of the traditionalist elite, and specifically on Münir Bey. He had been reappointed to the Executive Council immediately after the revolt, and his salary had been raised after the Governor's suggestion to the Secretary of State.⁹² With the abolition of representative institutions, the power of the loyal elite had been almost entirely restored. This policy was criticized even in the Colonial Office, which started favouring a rapprochement between the government and the younger Turkish-Cypriot generation that was increasingly attracted to Kemalism:

In the past the Turks have been a loyal and valuable element from the British standpoint. It was their loyalty which enabled us to work the old constitution for half a century. But the rise of Kemalist Turkey ... has naturally much affected the minds of the younger generation of Turks in Cyprus. They are beginning to get impatient of British rule and to turn their eyes to Turkey, where many of them have gone... I have long doubted the wisdom of Sir Richmond Palmer's policy in the face of this problem. He has relied ... far too much upon Munir Bey ... as the link between Government and the Moslem community. Munir Bey ... stands for the old regime and is everything which is opposed to modern Turkey. He is for the fez and the veil: while the younger generation of more educated Turks in Cyprus are all for more advanced ideas... I do not think that as an exclusive channel of contact he forms a really very reliable guide to Government.⁹³

This change of line in the Colonial Office coincided with assurances from the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs that if anyone of Turkish origin attempted to create hostility between Turkey and the Cyprus Government, he would become an enemy of Turkey. The minister distanced himself from 'Turkish nationalism' in Cyprus.⁹⁴ The fate of the island would not constitute a national case (*milli dava*) for Turkey until the Second World War. The irredentist calls of the Turkish-Cypriot modernists, asking for union with Turkey in case Britain withdrew from Cyprus, were not compatible with Kemalist principles and were rejected by Turkey. Besides, Greek-Turkish cooperation during the interwar period, as well as Greece's own refusal to consider Greek-Cypriot calls for enosis and Britain's determination to retain the island, underpinned the status quo. Furthermore, during the second half of the 1930s, and especially in

⁹¹ NA, FO 371/21935, *Visit of s.s. 'Hamidiye' to Cyprus*, Governor Palmer to Secretary of State MacDonald, 24 June 1938. Emphasis in the original.

⁹² Münir Bey was characterized by the Governor as 'a man of unusual administrative ability under whose guidance the Department of Evcaf has achieved a most laudable pitch of efficiency'. CSA, SA1/942/1919, *British Delegate of Evcaf: Vacancy Paper*, Governor to Secretary of State Cunliffe-Lister, 12 October 1934.

⁹³ NA, CO 67/281/14, Arthur Dawe's minute, 15 November 1937.

⁹⁴ Ktoris, 2011, pp. 92-93.

the period before the outbreak of the war, Turkey attempted to establish a closer relationship with Britain. In October 1939, a treaty was signed between Turkey and the governments of Britain and France, which guaranteed that the Allies would defend Turkey in the case that Germany attacked it.⁹⁵

Despite Turkey's disavowal of any irredentist views, Turkish-Cypriot nationalism continued to grow during the following years. In April 1943, an article in *Söz* stated:

We, Turks, ... absolutely believe that if we ever come under the administration of the Greek majority we will be suppressed... [T]he powerful Turkish Republic ... will undoubtedly take measures to protect us, her children outside her territory. The Turkish government will undoubtedly deal with Cyprus ... after the end of the war.⁹⁶

Meanwhile, following the appointment of Governor William Battershill in 1939, the Colonial Office's desire to improve relations between the Cyprus Government and the Kemalists began to impact Turkish-Cypriot politics. During the war, the colonial authorities had attempted to control nationalist politics by coming to an understanding with the modernist camp. The authorities encouraged the establishment of Turkish-Cypriot associations that would include both the pro-government elite and the modernists. Most importantly, the British became alarmed by the major decline of traditionalist influence over the community, evidenced in the absolute victory of the modernists in the 1943 municipal elections. It is indicative that, in the face of the great appeal of the modernists, the traditionalists could not find candidates for the district of Nicosia. As a result, the candidates supported by the modernists took all four Turkish-Cypriot seats of the Nicosia municipal council unopposed.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ During the war, Kemalist ideology was gradually redefined, and developed an irredentist element in regards to those populations of Turkic origins living outside the Republic (*Diş Türkler*, or External Turks), as well as an anti-communist element. Following the war, with Turkey's incorporation in the Western camp, the anti-communist ideology was reinforced. In this context, the Turkish-Cypriot community, inhabiting moreover a former Ottoman territory, started being considered as threatened by both the Greek state and the Greek-Cypriot majority on the island, as well as by a strong communist movement, represented by AKEL.

⁹⁶ Republication of article in *Söz* by *Neos Kypriakos Phylax*, 7 April 1943.

⁹⁷ Three seats were won by Fazıl Küçük and his associates, and one by Necati. *Eleftheria*, 'The results of the municipal elections in Nicosia and the other towns', 22 March 1943.

On 18 April, less than a month after the elections, the Kıbrıs Adası Türk Azınlıklar Kurumu [Association of the Turkish Minority of the Island of Cyprus – KATAK] was founded.⁹⁸ The founding meetings were held at the Evkaf offices and were attended by some 80 representatives.⁹⁹ The first governing committee of the association was composed of Necati Bey, Fazıl Küçük, Münir Bey and five others. In his speeches, Necati Bey stressed the need to overcome the differences that had divided the community since the 1930 elections. Küçük expressed similar views.¹⁰⁰ Although the participation of Münir Bey secured a role for the traditionalist elite within the KATAK, the association very soon became involved in Turkish-Cypriot nationalist politics, as British officials admitted themselves. The association was in fact the result of a compromise between the traditionalist elite and the modernists. For the modernists, KATAK was particularly regarded as a pole that could promote anti-enosis politics more effectively as well as a modernist reorganization of the community. For the traditionalist elite and the government, the founding of the association was an attempt to co-opt the nationalist modernist leadership, whose influence could no longer be disregarded, and at the same time control its activities and appeal among the community. In this context, a few days after its foundation, the KATAK assured the Commissioner of Nicosia and Kyrenia that the association would encourage the cooperation of the community with the colonial authorities.¹⁰¹

The establishment of the KATAK was followed by that of Turkish-Cypriot trade unions and peasant organizations that seceded from the respective bi-communal organizations. Moreover, the association opened local branches in many towns and villages, widening its influence among the population. Notably, in October 1943, Turkish-Cypriot organizations celebrated the anniversary of the foundation of the Turkish Republic. According to government reports, Turkish-Cypriot politicians stressed the support of Turkey for the Turks of Cyprus, and requested the restoration of the island to Turkey if the British ever left.¹⁰² In the same period,

⁹⁸ In the founding meetings, the modernists suggested that the name of the association recognized the Turkish-Cypriots as a community and not as a minority, yet the suggestion was rejected. NA, CO 67/314/12, *Political situation: monthly reports from the Governor*, report for May 1943.

⁹⁹ *Neos Kypriakos Phylax*, 'A Pan-Cypriot Turkish national organization with abundant means is being founded', 20 April 1943.

¹⁰⁰ Küçük's article in *Halkın Sesi*, 25 April 1943.

¹⁰¹ NA, FCO 141/2816, *Formation of Cyprus Turkish National People's Party*, Commissioner's report to the Colonial Secretary, 22 April 1943.

¹⁰² NA, CO 67/314/12, reports on the political situation during April, May and October 1943.

however, many Turkish-Cypriots enrolled to the Cyprus Regiment, despite the fact that Turkey still held an official position of neutrality in the war.¹⁰³

Despite the appeal of the association, soon after the first steps of cooperation between the traditionalist and the modernist parties fractures appeared in their alliance. In April 1944, a year after the establishment of the KATAK, Küçük and his associates seceded from the association and founded the Turkish Cypriot National Union Party (KTMBP).¹⁰⁴ According to Rauf Denktaş, future leader of the community, the confrontation revolved around the competing set of goals put forward by each party. The traditionalist elite was in favour of maintaining cooperation with the government, while the modernists promoted the demand for treatment equal to that of the Greek-Cypriot community and put forward the claim for the restoration of Cyprus to Turkey in case of any change of the status quo. This claim would be vigorously put forward by the KTMBP until early 1947. The government proposals in the Consultative Assembly, which were received as a threat to the position of the community, forced the group to adopt a more pragmatic approach. Promoted by *Halkın Sesi* (*People's Voice*), the paper edited by Küçük, and other newspapers, the KTMBP's politics soon gained great influence among the community.¹⁰⁵

The new party became particularly active in calling for the reorganization of the community along Kemalist lines and in promoting nationalist politics. Notably, on 25 February 1945, two days after Turkey entered the war on the side of the Allies, Küçük, in his capacity as the General Secretary of the KTMBP, asked for permission to campaign for the enlistment of volunteers for the Turkish army. That particular appeal was rejected, but the party was allowed to fundraise for the Red Crescent.¹⁰⁶ A year later, the KTMBP stated its intention to boycott municipal elections, unless Turkish-Cypriots were given access to municipal government as deputy mayors and, for five out of each fifteen years, as mayors. When the demand was not satisfied, the KTMBP and the KATAK, in the municipality of Nicosia, decided to abstain from the elections. Explaining their decision, Küçük mentioned that Greek-Cypriot councillors had been asking for the union of Cyprus with Greece on every occasion and that the Turkish flag was

¹⁰³ NA, FCO 141/2348, *enlistment of Cypriot volunteers in the Turkish Army*, Colonial Secretary to the Nicosia Commissioner, 28 February 1945.

¹⁰⁴ NA, FCO 141/2816, KTMBP's memorandum to Governor Woolley and despatch to the Colonial Secretary, April and May 1944.

¹⁰⁵ *Halkın Sesi* began to be published in March 1942, and was banned by the government for a period of three months in January 1943. NA, CO 67/318/6, *Suspension of the Turkish newspaper 'Halkinsesi'*, February 1943.

¹⁰⁶ NA, FCO 141/2348, despatch by the party to the Colonial Secretary, 25 February 1945.

not raised in Nicosia Town Hall on official holidays.¹⁰⁷ As a result, the three seats of the Nicosia municipal council were given to non-politicians, while independent candidates and candidates supported by the KATAK were elected in the other districts.¹⁰⁸

Political developments in the Turkish-Cypriot community that had been previously underestimated by the Greek-Cypriot elite and had been given attention only by the Left now attracted the notice of a large part of the Greek-Cypriot press. Already in early 1943, newspapers reported on the results of the municipal elections for both communities, while the establishment of the KATAK received broad coverage.¹⁰⁹ In 1946 the decision of the KTMBP to abstain from the elections attracted extensive criticism from the Greek-Cypriot press, and was characterized as harmful to the interests of the Greek-Cypriot community. A year later, the Turkish-Cypriot position at the Consultative Assembly was further discussed and criticized.¹¹⁰ Although the dominant perception of Turkish-Cypriots as outsiders was maintained, political developments within the community could no longer be ignored.¹¹¹ Until the mid-1940s, the position of the Turkish-Cypriot leadership in favour of maintaining the status quo was considered as indicative of the absence of any national consciousness within the community – a view that still dominates Greek-Cypriot historiography.¹¹² From then on, all Greek-Cypriot political forces would realize the significance of the community for politics on the island. This still did not signal to the Greek-Cypriot leadership that Turkish-Cypriot views needed to be taken into account. Indeed, the tendency of the dominant Greek-Cypriot political discourse to be deaf to the voices of that community became accentuated at this stage.

¹⁰⁷ NA, FCO 141/3004, *Non-participation of Turkish Muslim candidates in the 1946 municipal elections in Nicosia*, report on speech by Küçük, May 1946; *Eleftheria*, 'Pre-elections speeches in Nicosia. – The Turks ignored a new opportunity for submitting candidacies', 14 May 1946.

¹⁰⁸ *Eleftheria*, 'The Turks and the elections', 16 May 1946; CO 67/323/7, *Political situation reports*, report for May 1946.

¹⁰⁹ See *Eleftheria*, 'The results of municipal elections in Nicosia and the other towns', 22 March 1943; 'Turks' association and establishment of cashier', 20 April 1943; 'The Turks' Organization', 4 May 1943; *Neos Kypriakos Phylax*, 'A Pan-Cypriot Turkish national organization with abundant means is being founded', 20 April 1943.

¹¹⁰ See *Eleftheria*, 'The Turks and the Consultative Assembly', 21 August 1947; 'Turkish demonstration', 30 December 1947; 'The sessions of the Consultative Assembly were postponed indefinitely', 22 May 1948.

¹¹¹ In 1944, *Eleftheria* published an editorial stating: 'The Turkish minority is in Cyprus after the conquest of the Island by Turkey through war. The Turkish are not therefore native inhabitants of Cyprus... The national future of a country is not determined by any ... minority. It is defined and decided by the majority and particularly the native majority of the population... The fellow inhabitants [σύνοικοι], Turks may trust the Greek governance'. *Eleftheria*, 'Minority's acrobatics', 21 August 1944. See also 'The anti-Greek role of the Turkish press', 10 January 1950.

¹¹² See *Eleftheria*, 'Cypriot Muslims' Loyalty', 10 February 1940; 'The administration of the Evkaf in 1939 – Muslims' loyalty', 6 April 1940; 'Turkish demonstration in favour of the regime', 30 November 1948.

3.4 New Government Policy and the Redefinition of Turkish-Cypriot Politics

As discussed in Chapter 2, following the end of the Second World War, the colonial authorities came to realize the necessity of redefining their policy on the administrative and the constitutional future of Cyprus. In July 1947, the Governor announced the prospect of forming a Consultative Assembly, to be composed of local representatives and leading personalities from both communities. The Assembly was to discuss in collaboration with the government the reinstitution of a legislative body and the granting of a constitution. The Assembly first convened on 1 November 1947 and was terminated ten months later without securing its objectives. As in the case of the Greek-Cypriot community, the Assembly led to great political transformations within the Turkish-Cypriot community.

Already in late 1946, on the occasion of the departure of Governor Woolley from Cyprus, and after the intentions of the colonial authorities had become known to the public, articles in the Turkish-Cypriot press warned that the proposed reforms would signify the degradation of the community's position and denounced the possibility of introducing self-government.¹¹³ As was the case throughout British rule, the Turkish-Cypriot leadership considered that any form of self-government based on proportional representation would undermine the community's position and would eventually lead to enosis. Rejecting any reforms that could grant institutional powers to the Greek-Cypriot community proportionate to their demographic majority, the Turkish-Cypriot leadership asked for the application of the principle of equal representation. The fear of undermining the community's position against the Greek-Cypriot majority had a major impact on the relations between the traditionalist Turkish-Cypriot elite and the modernists as well as on those between the latter and the government. Turkish-Cypriot concerns were reinforced by the negotiations on the fate of the Dodecanese, which started in mid-1946 and led to the transfer of the islands to Greece. Most significantly, given the escalating intransigence of the Greek-Cypriots in response to the British proposals, the modernists realized the necessity of a solid cooperation with the pro-British elite as well as with the government.

¹¹³ *Ateş (Fire)*, 11 December 1946, republished in *Cyprus Mail*, 13 December 1946.

In April 1947, *Halkın Sesi* published a welcome statement to the new Governor, Baron Winster. The newspaper expressed its satisfaction with the continuation of British governance in Cyprus, and gave assurances that the government would receive the full support of the community in the Consultative Assembly.¹¹⁴ Two weeks later, Küçük stated in an article in the same newspaper:

[T]he Greek compatriots should better ... enjoy the comfort and prosperity which always accompany this [the British] flag and should recognize that it is their 'Savior' whom they ask ... 'to withdraw from this island'... This ... movement in favour of Enosis may immediately be declared as unlawful by the Government, while those who have sworn loyalty to this movement may return to their mother country without a minimum waste of time.¹¹⁵

After a long period of opposition to the government, the modernists were now forced to change their attitude towards the colonial authorities. They now sought an alliance against the possibility of introducing a liberal constitution that could lead to majority self-government and eventually to enosis. Any claims that jeopardized cooperation with the government in the Consultative Assembly, most importantly that of union with Turkey in case of a change of Cyprus' status quo, were abandoned. The new position of the KTMBP in support of government proposals would be reaffirmed a few months later, as it became apparent that all Greek-Cypriot parties would reject them. In a series of articles in *Halkın Sesi*, the young lawyer Rauf Denktaş argued that the proposed constitutional governance should be accepted by Greek-Cypriots, and that the Turkish-Cypriot community preferred social reforms over the union of the island with Turkey.

In the same period, the KATAK, the KTMBP, the Association of Turkish Farmers and the Kıbrıs Türk İşçi Birliği Kurumu [Association of Turkish Trade Unions of Cyprus – KTIBK] submitted a joint memorandum to the Governor, indicating the growing consensus within the Turkish-Cypriot leadership.¹¹⁶ The memorandum repeated the longstanding demands of the modernists regarding communal affairs, which had been stipulated as early as 1931 by the Turkish National Congress of Cyprus, and put forward some new claims along similar lines. Most importantly, the memorandum asked for the reform of the legislation on municipal councils. First, the councils should elect by rotation a Turkish- and a Greek-Cypriot to the

¹¹⁴ *Halkın Sesi*, 11 April 1947.

¹¹⁵ *Eleftheria*, 'Turkish newspaper asks that the movement for Enosis be outlawed', 24 April 1947. Emphases in the original.

¹¹⁶ *Cyprus Mail*, 'Turkish memorandum to the governor', 21 April 1947.

respective offices of mayor and deputy mayor. Decisions of the councils that did not secure the consent of Turkish-Cypriot councillors should be subject to veto from the Governor. The memorandum further asked for provisions for the equal participation of Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots in the public service. It also called for the modernization of family law and the abolition of Sharia law, and demanded the replacement of the term 'Muslim' with 'Turkish' in all official documents. Finally, the Turkish-Cypriot organizations asked for full representation in the Consultative Assembly and declared their opposition to the introduction of any form of self-government, as well as their support for the government.¹¹⁷ Of course, the demand for restoration of Cyprus to Turkey in case of a change of the status quo was dropped, although self-government, to which the constitutional talks in the Consultative Assembly could lead, would constitute a definitive change in that direction. It would reappear even more insistently right after the resolution of the Assembly in August 1948.

The modernists were now forced to cooperate with the traditionalist elite and to openly support the government. At the same time, the codification of the claims that they had been advocating for almost two decades, which for the first time had united the Turkish-Cypriot leadership, signified the prevalence of their social and political programme within Turkish-Cypriot politics. During the following period, *Halkın Sesi* published a series of articles on the demands included in the memorandum, reaffirming again the community's opposition to enosis. Seeking to consolidate this programme, Denktaş suggested that a Turkish-Cypriot Committee be elected to legislate on all communal affairs and represent the community in a future Legislative Council.¹¹⁸ The government took these proposals into consideration and, after the failure of the Consultative Assembly, it founded the Committee on Turkish Affairs - although with a role different from that envisaged by Denktaş.

In this context, the announcement of the convocation of the Consultative Assembly in July was welcomed by the entire Turkish-Cypriot leadership. Both *Halkın Sesi* and *Hur Söz* [Free Word], the mouthpiece of the KATAK, denounced the prospect of autonomy and self-government based on proportional representation. The Turkish-Cypriot leadership reaffirmed its

¹¹⁷ The same position was held by the Turkish Consul, who submitted various protests to the government, demanding the equal treatment of Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots on the island. See NA, FCO 141/3026, *Protests by the Turkish Consul regarding anti-Turkish incidents*, January 1947 – December 1949.

¹¹⁸ Katsiaounis, 2000, p. 292.

commitment to cooperate with the government.¹¹⁹ As indicated by the Turkish-Cypriots' invitation to participate in the Assembly, the British still considered the KATAK their most loyal ally, despite the KTMBP's new conciliatory stance. The leader of the Association of Turkish Trade Unions, Hasan Sasmaz, and Denktaş were the only KTMBP members to be invited, compared to the five persons who were selected from the KATAK. After the composition of the delegation was finalized the mayor of Lefka, Niyazi Fadıl convened a meeting of the delegates to the Assembly and 30 other leading individuals of the community, 12 of which – among them the editors of *Halkın Sesi* and *Hur Söz* – were selected as assistants to the delegation.¹²⁰

A few weeks after the convocation of the Assembly, in December 1947, the Turkish-Cypriot leadership organized a rally in Nicosia, attended by more than 6000 persons. The demonstrators approved a resolution against self-government and enosis, and submitted it to the Secretary of State, Arthur Creech Jones.¹²¹ In the following months, as the Greek-Cypriot representatives' intention to withdraw from the Assembly was becoming ever more apparent, the Turkish-Cypriot representatives gradually moved towards adopting all British proposals.¹²² Ultimately, delegates were asked to express their final positions in the crucial sessions of 20 and 21 May 1948, and the entire Turkish-Cypriot delegation accepted the proposed reforms. The trade union representative Sasmaz stressed that the rights of the minority should not be undermined by the majority and that the two communities should be treated separately but equally. His speech echoed the demands of the KTMBP and its nationalist discourse and included no direct reference to loyalty to the government.¹²³ İrfan Hüseyin from the KATAK focused on the tradition of peaceful coexistence between the two communities, and stressed the advantages of belonging to the British Commonwealth. Notably, Sübhi Kanaan, the representative of the Turkish-Cypriot municipal councillors and also from the KATAK, referred to the 'Turkish principles of the community', indicating the ideological prevalence of the modernists even among their rivals in the Turkish-Cypriot leadership. Finally, Denktaş, in his speech, codified the modernists' demands for communal autonomy and stressed the community's opposition to enosis.

¹¹⁹ Extract republished in *Cyprus Mail*, 8 August 1947.

¹²⁰ *Cyprus Mail*, 21 August 1947.

¹²¹ *Eleftheria*, 'Turkish Rally', 30 December 1947.

¹²² NA, CO 537/4035, *Constitution*, reports on the Assembly's sessions, late 1947 – early 1948.

¹²³ NA, CO 537/4036, *Constitution*, Consultative Assembly session of 21 May 1948.

The collapse of the Assembly in August 1948 pacified Turkish-Cypriot fears, and signalled the beginning of a period of cooperation between the colonial government and the united Turkish-Cypriot leadership. They joined forces against a radicalized Greek-Cypriot nationalism, mobilized around the slogan ‘enosis and only enosis’, which had been adopted by all Greek-Cypriot political forces, including the Left.¹²⁴ The alignment between the colonial authorities and Turkish-Cypriot politicians on this basis was maintained until 1958, and would determine the form and extent of broader cooperation and consensus on communal affairs. In June 1948, the government announced the establishment of the Committee on Turkish Affairs, making for the first time clear its intention to address at least partially the demands of the modernists on the institutional reorganization of the community.¹²⁵ Two months later Küçük stated:

[W]e Turks will ... rally around our governor, who proved clearly how much he values the protection of our rights... Neither self-government nor enosis will save us. We will secure our dignity, existence and honour through legal and broad rights granted by democratic England.¹²⁶

Zekia Bey, former member of the Legislative Council and Judge at the Nicosia-Kyrenia District Court, presided over the Committee, which was composed by seven other prominent figures of the community. In contrast to the composition of the delegation in the Consultative Assembly, most members of the Committee belonged to the modernist camp. The questions to be discussed concerned the institutional organization of the community, and included the majority of the demands that had been put forward by the modernists since late 1920s: the reorganization of the Evkaf and Education departments, the reestablishment of the Muftiship and the modernization of family law and the Sharia Courts. Besides its formal composition, the Committee reserved right to name additional members to contribute to its final proposals, and leading figures of the community were indeed called to elaborate upon the questions raised.

Seeking feedback from the government, the Committee decided initially to submit an interim report. In the opening speeches that were also attended by the Governor and the Turkish Consul, Zekia Bey declared the Committee’s loyalty to the colonial authorities, and affirmed that

¹²⁴ *Eleftheria*, ‘The anti-Cypriot group of the Consultative Assembly was at last dissolved – Enthusiast applause by the Turkish members’, 13 August 1948.

¹²⁵ *Cyprus Mail*, 12 June 1948.

¹²⁶ Küçük’s article in *Halkın Sesi*, 18 August 1948.

the sole aspiration of the community was the maintenance of British rule.¹²⁷ The task of preparing the interim report proved an unprecedented process for the community. A large number of Turkish-Cypriots participated in the debates that preceded the publication of the report, and the process mobilized a broad section of the population in dealing with crucial communal issues. By mid-November, representatives from all districts and towns with a Turkish-Cypriot population, as well as all elected representatives of the community (presidents and members of municipal and district councils), about 1000 individuals in total, had agreed to the final form of the interim report.¹²⁸

The report focused on bringing all communal institutions under the control of elected representatives, which would secure their autonomy from the colonial administration. First, it criticized the government for handing the administration of Evkaf property and revenue to individual Turkish-Cypriots based on their loyalty, and empowering them in the community. In that respect, the report requested the abolition of the office of the delegate of the Evkaf and its replacement by an elected administrative council. Together with the head of the Evkaf Department, the council would exercise all powers that had been vested in the delegates and the Governor. Furthermore, the report demanded that control over educational affairs be restored to the community, and suggested the establishment of elected educational councils to deal with all educational questions, from the selection of the curriculum to the introduction of new textbooks. The report also suggested the introduction of legislation on compulsory schooling, and the adoption of Turkish bank holidays. Finally, the report called for the reestablishment of the Muftiship, the replacement of Sharia courts by special family civil courts, and the adoption of a civil code similar to that in force in Turkey.¹²⁹

The Committee's proposals demonstrated that the modernists had successfully imposed their politics on the entire Turkish-Cypriot leadership, which was now firmly consolidated under Küçük. Nevertheless, the government made clear that the aspirations of the Turkish-Cypriot leadership for communal autonomy could not be met. The submission of the report had coincided with the replacement of Governor Winster by Sir Andrew Wright. As the new

¹²⁷ *Cyprus Mail*, 25 June 1948.

¹²⁸ See NA, FCO 141/3021, *1948 Commission on Turkish Affairs*; NA, FCO 141 3067-3076, Committee on Turkish Affairs: interim report, parts 1-7, Family Law; administration of Turkish infants' estates; Sharia Courts; Evkaf; education; elections.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

Governor stressed, very few of the proposals could be adopted, while none of them could be introduced without amendments, with the exception of a new family law. As he admitted, however, the establishment of the committee had served the goal of the government to empower the Turkish-Cypriot community with regard to the island's politics.¹³⁰

3.5 Towards a Radical Nationalist Politics

Following the dissolution of the Consultative Assembly, the Turkish-Cypriot leadership was faced with the radicalization of Greek-Cypriot nationalism. The community leaders opposed all attempts at enosis, and resumed agitation for the return of Cyprus to Turkey in case of any change in the status quo. Furthermore, the leadership began urging the Turkish government to intervene in support of this request, and to exert influence on Britain and the USA not to give in to the Greek-Cypriot leadership's enosis demands.

In November 1948, a few days after a pro-enosis demonstration organized by AKEL, the Turkish-Cypriot leadership organized one of the largest demonstrations in the history of the community – more than 6000 Turkish-Cypriots participated. The speakers at the demonstration criticized AKEL and denounced the participation of Turkish-Cypriots in bi-communal trade unions that were controlled by the party. The organizers renounced enosis and self-government, and stressed that Cyprus should be returned to Turkey if Britain left the island.¹³¹ A few weeks later in January 1949, AKEL formally abandoned its line for 'self-government – enosis' and readopted the intransigent enosis discourse. Küçük stressed: 'Cyprus is Turkish and will remain Turkish. Communism is the greatest enemy of Turkey and the struggle against communism must be held as well'.¹³²

In the same period, Turkish-Cypriot mobilizations aroused the interest of pan-Turkic organizations and part of the press in Turkey. In late 1948, a series of articles in the Turkish newspaper *Hürriyet* [*Freedom*] argued that neither the Dodecanese nor Cyprus should ever be given to Greece, even to the detriment of Greek-Turkish friendship. One of the paper's headlines

¹³⁰ NA, FO 371/88007, Governor Wright to the Colonial Office, 21 June 1950.

¹³¹ NA, CO 537/4041, *Reports on political situation*, report for November 1948; *Cyprus Mail* 21, 27 and 30 November 1948; *Eleftheria*, 'Turkish demonstration in favour of the regime', 30 November 1948.

¹³² Küçük's article in *Hur Söz*, 7 January 1949.

bore the title 'Cyprus is ours'.¹³³ In September 1949, the newspaper made even clearer its position on Cyprus:

There is no Cyprus question. Even as a dream it is not possible for anyone to imagine a day that the island next to Turkey's coast will be given to the Greeks. Cyprus is entrusted to the administration of England. For the moment the sovereignty will not change. If such a question occurs it can be only returned to Turkey. The Greeks of Cyprus should know that well.¹³⁴

In the same period the *Cypriot Turkish Cultural Association* was founded in Ankara, and Turkish student unions organized demonstrations in opposition to both Greek-Cypriot nationalism and communism.¹³⁵ The Turkish official position, however, remained that the Republic had no claims on Cyprus, and that it would by no means support the Turkish-Cypriot leadership's calls.

Turkish-Cypriot opposition to enosis and calls for union with Turkey in case Britain ever left Cyprus gained in intensity in the period before and after the Greek-Cypriot enosis plebiscite. In September 1949, all Turkish-Cypriot organizations joined forces as the *Federation of Turkish Cypriot Associations*, founded under the guidance of Nevzat Karagil, a pan-Turkist of Cypriot origin. A month later, the KTMBP and the KATAK also united under the Kıbrıs Türk Partisi [Cypriot Turkish Party]. In December of the same year, the Turkish-Cypriot municipal councillors of Limassol, Famagusta and Larnaca reacted to a petition of Greek-Cypriot mayors in favour of the plebiscite announced by AKEL. A large-scale demonstration against the plebiscite and enosis took place in Nicosia.¹³⁶ Fadıl Korkut, General Secretary of the Cypriot Turkish Party, encapsulated the position of the Turkish-Cypriot leadership:

The plebiscite concerning the claim for the union of Cyprus with Greece constitutes an unprovoked political maneuver... Turks ... believe that the island must remain under British occupation for economical, military, geographical and political reasons. If Britain ever left Cyprus the island should be returned to its

¹³³ Ktoris, 2011, pp. 194-195.

¹³⁴ *Hürriyet*, 'The front of Turks of Cyprus', 20 September 1949. Cited in Ktoris, 2011, p. 195.

¹³⁵ Notably, one of the student representatives stated that Turkey's national army would soon take Cyprus back. *Ethnos*, 'The movement for saving the 'endangered' Turkish population of Cyprus continues in Turkey!', 18 January 1949; 'Astonishing speeches of Turks', 23 December 1949, republished from Turkish newspaper *Tan (Dawn)*; NA, CO 67/342/2, *Interim report of the Committee on Turkish Affairs 1949*, British Ambassador to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Ernest Bevin, 19 February 1949.

¹³⁶ NA, CO 537/4973, *Reports on political situation*, report for December 1949.

previous owner, Turkey. Union would bring distress and would pave the way for the advance of communism in Middle East.¹³⁷

At the same time, the efforts of Turkish-Cypriots and pan-Turkists and their campaign in the press resulted in a slight change in Turkey's position on the question. A few days before the plebiscite, the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Necmettin Sadak, stressed to the British Ambassador that if Cyprus was to be abandoned this would constitute a major question for the Turkish government and that negotiations should necessarily be carried out with it beforehand.¹³⁸ Nevertheless, the inclusion of Turkey in the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan in 1947 as well as its entry into NATO together with Greece in 1952 signalled the country's incorporation into the US sphere of influence. These developments necessitated the avoidance of any move that could result in a dispute between the two countries, and resulted in the maintenance of the official refusal to intervene in any way.

Following the plebiscite, the Turkish-Cypriot reaction reached its peak. In February 1950, a Turkish-Cypriot delegation visited Turkey to ask for the government's assistance in countering the efforts of the Greek-Cypriot leadership to internationalize the Cyprus question and in blocking its attempt to present the results of the plebiscite to the United Nations.¹³⁹ After the meetings, the Turkish-Cypriot delegation stated that they had produced satisfactory and definite results. Conversely, the Turkish government did not issue a statement, and the Turkish Foreign Minister called upon young Turks to abstain from activities that could harm Turkish foreign policy, referring to the large-scale student demonstrations in Istanbul, Ankara and Sivas.¹⁴⁰ A few months later, the Turkish-Cypriot leadership asked the Arab League to abstain from any support to a possible Greek-Cypriot appeal to the UN. In the same period, Turkish organizations and student unions continued actively to promote the Turkish-Cypriot community's demands, and, in August, 50 teachers arrived on the island from Turkey, encouraging new demonstrations.

¹³⁷ Cited in Ktoris, 2011, p. 205, *Ateş*, 12 December 1949.

¹³⁸ Similar statements were made a year later by the new Turkish Foreign Minister, Fuat Köprülü and the General Secretary of the Republican People's Party, then in opposition. NA, FO 371/87716, *Cyprus: Greek aspirations towards 'Enosis'*, British Ambassador in Turkey to Foreign Office, 25 January 1950; NA, FO 371/95133, *Question of Cyprus union with Greece or Enosis: Turkish position*, despatches by the British Ambassador in Greece and the British Ambassador in Turkey to Foreign Office, 25/4 and 1 May 1951.

¹³⁹ A small number of Turkish-Cypriots voted in the plebiscite in favour of Cyprus' union with Greece. According to Ploutis Servas, 800 Turkish-Cypriots did so, 200 according to Denktas. According to research by Sotos Ktoris based on the volumes of the plebiscite at the Historical Museum of the EOKA's Struggle, however, this number did not exceed 42 Turkish-Cypriots: Servas, 1980, p. 151; Ktoris, 2011, pp. 207-209.

¹⁴⁰ NA, CO 537/6235, report on political situation during February 1950.

Notably, the Ottoman conquest of Nicosia in 1571 was commemorated in September, with slogans such as ‘Long live Union with Turkey’ and ‘Cyprus is ours’ dominating the celebrations.¹⁴¹

Meanwhile, the British had begun considering the usefulness of using Turkish-Cypriot nationalism against Greek-Cypriot demands of enosis.¹⁴² Soon after the plebiscite, the government encouraged the Turkish-Cypriot leadership to submit a memorandum of its own to the United Nations. The Turkish-Cypriot memorandum, submitted in April 1950, attempted to counter past and present Greek-Cypriot claims for self-government and enosis and to prove the Turkish character of Cyprus. The memorandum described the Greek-Cypriot community as a minority when compared to the Turkish population in Anatolia, of which Cyprus formed a part.¹⁴³ Notably, the argumentation of the text did not focus on countering the principle of self-government, but on the disastrous results of a potential union with Greece. Given the rise of anti-colonial movements in the post-war period, the argument for the maintenance of British rule in Cyprus could not convincingly stand. Furthermore, the memorandum used the support enjoyed by AKEL among the Greek-Cypriots as evidence of a ‘communist threat’ and the inevitability of a civil war in the colony in the case of enosis. Conversely, the memorandum presented Turkey as the only force in the Near East that could protect the island and stressed that Cyprus should be restored to it if ever abandoned by Britain.¹⁴⁴ Notably, the cold war argument regarding the ‘communist threat’ in part echoed the official American position on Cyprus, stipulated at a conference in Istanbul a few months earlier: Britain should enhance moves against communist groups in the colony and the USA would make clear to Greece and Turkey that it did not support their claims on the island.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Ibid., reports for August and September 1950.

¹⁴² NA, FO 371/87719, British Ambassador in Greece to Sir Anthony Rumbold, Head of the Southern Department of Foreign Office, 19 May 1950.

¹⁴³ NA, CO 537/6235, report on political situation during April 1950.

¹⁴⁴ A few years later, the existence of teachers of ‘reactionary and communist beliefs’ on the island would be the main argument invoked by the Turkish Government for requesting the participation of the Ministry of Education in the Turkish-Cypriot community’s educational affairs. NA, FO 371/107589, *Recruitment of Turkish teachers for Cyprus; visit to Cyprus by Turkish students*, British Ambassador in Turkey to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Sir Anthony Eden, 21 July 1953.

¹⁴⁵ NA, FO 371/78427, *Future of Cyprus*, Anthony Rumbold to the Secretary of State, Arthur Creech Jones, 30 December 1949.

In the following period, Turkish-Cypriot calls for union with Turkey would intensify. In late 1950, Karagil argued that union would be attempted as soon as the international situation became convenient, while two years later *Halkın Sesi* called for a national struggle by the Turkish-Cypriot people for the restoration of Cyprus to Turkey.¹⁴⁶ The official demand of the Turkish-Cypriot leadership would remain, however, that Cyprus be restored to Turkey only if Britain abandoned the island. Nevertheless, the demand, as well as the calls for a Turkish intervention against enosis agitation, remained unrealistic as long as Turkey maintained its unwillingness to reconsider the question. That position would not change until the mid-1950s.

Conclusion

In contrast to the Greek-Cypriot community, in which the Orthodox Church adopted an increasingly radical nationalist discourse and legitimated its politics in the name of the Greek nation, the Turkish-Cypriot traditionalist elite was eventually overcome by the Turkish-Cypriot advocates of nationalism. Following the foundation of the Turkish Republic, a rising tendency towards Kemalist modernism and, increasingly, nationalism emerged within the Turkish-Cypriot community. By the beginning of the 1930s, the modernists had secured their own political space. Turkish-Cypriot nationalism underwent a process of transformations until its consolidation in communal politics in the late 1940s. Certain distinct features, however, were maintained throughout this period.

First, Turkish-Cypriot nationalism adopted to a great extent the principles of Kemalist ideology, yet adapted them to the local political context. Faced with the government's support for the traditionalist elite, the modernists sought to create a distinct political space, if necessary in contradiction to fundamental Kemalist axioms. Demands for the protection and reestablishment of the Muftiship, a religious institution *par excellence*, though incompatible with the principle of secularism, encapsulated the attempts of the modernists for communal autonomy. Hence, Turkish-Cypriot nationalism did not involve conflict with religion, as did Kemalist nationalism in Turkey. Notably, a determining factor in the abolition of the Muftiship in 1929 was the government's fear that the Mufti could emerge as national leader of the Turkish-Cypriot

¹⁴⁶ NA, CO 537/6235, report on political situation during September 1950; Ktoris, 2011, p. 219.

community, with an authority analogous to that of the Orthodox Archbishop. The same considerations determined the Mufti's obligation to abstain from any political and non-religious activity when the Office was re-established in 1950.

Furthermore, Turkish-Cypriot nationalism from its inception had to cope with a radicalized Greek-Cypriot nationalism, which was perceived as a threat to the very existence of the community. As a result, it developed from early on an irredentist element, contrary to Kemalist principles. Turkey, however, did not regard Cyprus as an issue of national importance, nor did it adopt the Turkish-Cypriots as an unredeemed population until the Second World War. In fact, the very demand for restoration of Cyprus to Turkey in case Britain ever left the island was initially formulated as a counter-claim to that of the Greek-Cypriot leadership's for enosis. The first appearance of the demand for restoration of Cyprus to the Ottoman Empire occurred in December 1918, after the attempts of the Greek-Cypriot leadership to raise the question of enosis at the Paris Peace Conference. In the following years, the claim would be put forward ever more insistently, especially in periods of intense enosis agitation. Nevertheless, demands for restoration of the island to Turkey lacked any realism as long as the Republic remained officially unwilling to consider the Turkish-Cypriot leadership's calls for intervention.

Finally, Turkish-Cypriot nationalism was not essentially anti-colonial. In the face of growing Greek-Cypriot agitation for union with Greece the Turkish-Cypriot nationalist leadership decided that the interests of the community would be better protected if Cyprus remained a British colony. Thus, despite their general opposition to the government, the modernists from early on cooperated with or supported it in moments when the position of the community was seen as threatened by the Greek-Cypriot majority, such as the 1931 revolt, the Consultative Assembly in 1947-48, and during the 1950s. Notably, Britain itself began from the early 1950s to explore ways to use Turkish-Cypriot nationalism against Greek-Cypriot enosis politics.

Until the late 1940s, government efforts focused on controlling the appeal of nationalist politics, as promoted by the modernists, and to maintain the influence of the traditionalist elite. The British refused to endorse the modernizing socio-political programme put forward by the new Turkish-Cypriot leadership and its calls for communal autonomy. Nevertheless, as in the case of Greek-Cypriot nationalism, government policy failed in that respect. In fact, the colonial

authorities were forced to recognize the prevalence of Turkish-Cypriot nationalism and the ongoing transformation of the community as facts. They eventually redefined their position towards the new leadership after the definite manifestation of its prevalence within the community in the mid-1940s. In contrast to the traditionalist elite of the community, the modernists' cooperation with the colonial authorities would depend on political conjunctures until the end of colonial rule.

In the case of the Greek-Cypriot community, the emergence and consolidation of the Left, a secular modernizing political force, had challenged the confessional politics of the community. For the Turkish-Cypriots, it was the emergence of Kemalist modernist politics that posed a great threat to the traditionalist elite. Although both the leadership of the Left and the modernist Kemalist intelligentsia demanded modernizing reforms and opposed confessional politics, cooperation between them on a modernist platform was rarely contemplated. Some opportunities of joint action appeared on two specific occasions. The first occurred in the context of the Consultative Assembly, the Left being the only group to participate along with the Turkish-Cypriot leadership. The eventual withdrawal of AKEL from the Assembly in order to secure its national credentials within Greek-Cypriot politics, however, doomed any form of cooperation. The second, much more successful occurrence was the Collaboration Protocol signed in January 1948 between the Pan-Cypriot Labour Federation, controlled by AKEL, and the Association of Turkish Trade Unions of Cyprus, controlled by the KTMBP, under the pressure of the labour movement. The protocol provided for large-scale common action on labour issues, as will be analysed in the next chapter. The growing division of Cypriot society along ethnic lines, however, evident by the end of the 1940s, and the further strengthening of both the Greek- and the Turkish-Cypriot nationalisms in the following period would prevent further collaboration between the two trade union bodies after 1948.

Therefore, the most important factor that hindered the formation of a large-scale understanding between the modernist Turkish-Cypriot leadership and the leadership of the Left was the growing nationalist element in the politics of both. In January 1950, a few days before the conduct of the enosis plebiscite, AKEL issued a declaration in Turkish, arguing that the Turkish-Cypriot community's duty was to respect the demand of the Greek-Cypriots for

enosis.¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, Kemalist ideology, both in Turkey and Cyprus, gradually acquired a strong anti-communist element, especially after the Second World War. Finally, the modernist platforms suggested by both the Left and the Turkish-Cypriot leadership met with government opposition, thus minimizing the chances of a potential cooperation to achieve the implementation of respective reforms. However, common Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot action materialized extensively at the grassroots level, within the political space of the Left. From its very first steps, the Cypriot labour movement constituted the main space of cooperation between the two communities.

¹⁴⁷ NA, FO 371/87716, AKEL declaration, 12 January 1950.

Chapter 4: The Attempt to Escape the Ethnic Divide: The Labour Movement and the Left

This chapter examines the emergence and political representation of the Cypriot labour movement. It highlights how the working class of the island developed a political consciousness, and the politics of the parties of the Left, the Communist Party of Cyprus (KKK) and its successor, the Progressive Party of the Working People (AKEL). Despite the government's legal and administrative attempts to stem the expansion of trade unionism and the direct repression of communist organizations, a broad left-wing and secular political space had been consolidated by the early 1940s, drastically reshaping the Cypriot political landscape. The Left opposed both the confessional and the nationalist Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot elites and the colonial government, and developed a militant political discourse and set of practices. Its demands ranged from introduction of labour legislation to the democratization of the administration. Most significantly, the labour movement appealed to both Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots, crossing the established ethnic and religious boundaries. By the end of the 1940s, however, it would become increasingly evident that an ethnic divide in Cypriot society had not been averted.

As mentioned in the Introduction, there have been very few historiographical attempts to explore the history of trade unionism and labour mobilizations in Cyprus. The majority of existing studies that address the subject were produced by trade union bodies and leaders. At the same time, there is also a lack of scholarly works examining the politics of the parties of the Left during the period 1931-1950. This chapter, therefore, attempts to contribute to overcoming this gap, and suggests a narrative for the politics of the labour movement and the Left and their significance for Cypriot society.

4.1 The Emergence of the Political Space of the Left

In order to understand the context within which the political space of the Left emerged, it is necessary to examine the socio-economic transformations taking place in Cyprus during the 1920s and 1930s. During this period, the economy was increasingly focused on exports, and

Cypriot society underwent a process of industrialization and a related process of urbanization. The first process led to the gradual collapse of the economic model that had depended on peasant smallholders, and to a rapid growth of the share of wage labour in total employment. At the same time, the experience of town life contributed, together with other factors, to the development of more communication and a sense of solidarity among the lower strata of society. The emerging working class would form the backbone of the nascent labour movement and would respond favourably to the politics of the newly-founded Communist Party.

During the 1920s, the collapse of peasant smallholdership, which had sustained economic activity on the island, was evident. That process was attributed to the indebtedness of the smallholders to moneylenders, when high interest rates resulted in the expropriation of their property, leading to financial ruin. In 1924, there were records of 3,304 forced sales of properties, totalling 56,862 *donums* - compared respectively to 2,470 properties and 36,752 *donums* in 1923. The sales included 665 houses and buildings, with a total estimated value of £170,323 and a total price of £158,030.¹ A memorandum of the Governor in January 1929 stated that 80% of the peasantry was in debt to moneylenders.² According to a survey on rural economic and social conditions, conducted by the Limassol Commissioner Brewster Surridge, 16% of the peasantry owned no land, worked as agricultural labourers, and lived in extreme poverty. Half of the peasantry lived in slightly better but still difficult conditions, and only about 25% could be considered prosperous.³ This situation, which deteriorated even further during the 1929 crisis and its aftermath, can be traced to developments of the previous decade. During the First World War, agricultural production expanded rapidly, as indicated by the rise of exports.⁴ The decline in agricultural production in the countries participating in the war created a profitable state of affairs for the Cypriot peasantry, who took out large loans in order to increase their productive capacity to match the growing external demand. As a result, the peasants went into debt, borrowing from moneylenders, who charged them very high interest rates. The demand created due to the war, however, proved only temporary. After 1919, exports started falling sharply, and the brief recovery after the mid-1920s would only last until the end of the decade, as shown in the following table:

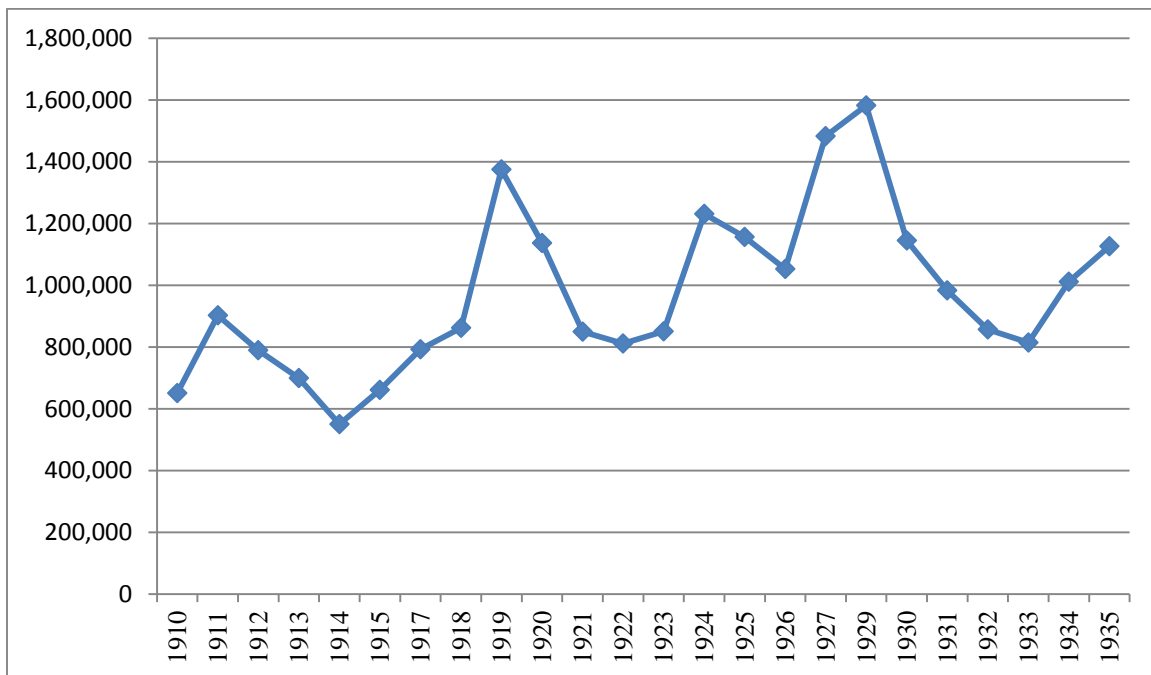
¹ Georghallides, 1979, p. 429.

² Katsourides, 2014, p. 25.

³ Brewster Joseph Surridge, *A Survey of Rural Life in Cyprus* (Nicosia: Government Printing Office, 1930).

⁴ Panayiotou, 1999, p. 148.

Table 1. Value of Exports in Pound Sterling, 1910-1935⁵



The fall of external demand after the war combined with rising debts resulted in greatly deteriorating conditions for the peasantry. While peasant debt in 1914 totalled about £100,000, by the end of the war it had reached £3,000,000, forcing a large part of the agricultural population to sell its land.⁶ Thus, as early as the 1920s, Cyprus witnessed an important change in its economic structure. In the following decade, the transformation of the Cypriot agricultural economy together with ongoing urbanization would accelerate. At the same time, the economic crisis that followed the end of the First World War caused discontent among the lower classes. The anger of the population was mainly directed against the moneylenders and the largest landowner on the island – the Church. Discontent with the established local political forces became increasingly evident, and was demonstrated in 1925. The elections of that year for the

⁵ Sources: *Cyprus Blue Books*, Government Printing Office, Nicosia, 1910-1936.

⁶ Panayiotou, 1999, p. 150.

Legislative Council constituted a serious blow for the traditionalist Greek-Cypriot elite, to the benefit of new politicians.⁷

Most importantly, the transformation of the Cypriot economy during the 1910s and 1920s contributed to a parallel transformation of Cypriot society as a whole, bringing about the emergence of new social groups and gradually leading to the establishment of a new class structure. By the end of the 1920s, the consolidation of the Greek-Cypriot bourgeois and middle classes, which had begun already during the Ottoman period, was complete. Merchants had gained the most from the period of economic growth, enjoying high prices for exports. The agricultural crises that followed, especially in the years immediately after the First World War, enabled merchants and moneylenders to foreclose on the land that farmers had mortgaged. Until at least the late 1910s, Cypriot capital was thus almost exclusively based on commerce and money lending. Furthermore, the investment on infrastructure, and especially on transportation and communication networks, allowed for the expansion of internal economic activity. This process facilitated the development of small-scale manufacture and industry, including activities such as wine and tobacco production.

Together with the emergence of a bourgeoisie consisting of merchants, moneylenders and professionals, a middle class of craftsmen (shoemakers, carpenters, masons, tailors, lace makers, weavers, dressmakers, bakers, blacksmiths and others), retailers and employees was also experiencing considerable growth. The number of individuals involved in commercial activities grew from 405 in 1891 to 3,220 in 1921, while in 1923 there were 107 lawyers, 117 medical doctors, 1,178 teachers, 5,929 merchants and thousands of employees in commercial houses.⁸ The census of 1931 registered 2,204 public servants, compared to 500 in 1891. By the early 1930s, agriculture was still the main occupation of Cyprus' inhabitants, but a significant part of the population was by now occupied in the craft industry and the service sector, as shown in the following table.

⁷ At the 1925 elections, eight out of the twelve Greek-Cypriot members of the body were elected for the first time. Protopapas, 2012, p. 263.

⁸ Panayiotou, 1999, p. 30.

Table 2. Occupations in Cyprus, 1931⁹

Occupation	Labour force
Agriculture: Farmers and cultivators, ploughmen and agriculture workers, gardeners, shepherds, muleteers	68804
Craft industry: Boot and shoemakers, carpenters, masons, mason labourers, tailors, lace-makers, weavers, dressmakers, bakers, blacksmiths	24094
Services: Chauffeurs, clerks and employees, professors and teachers, domestic servants, barbers, clergy, waiters	13242
Trade: Commission agents and merchants, grocers and fruiterers, coffee shop proprietors, butchers, hawkers	5674
Labour: Labourers in mines and quarries	3197
Total	115011

In the early 1930s, the economy of the island had to cope with the combined effects of the world economic crisis that followed the 1929 slump and a three-year drought (1932-1934). The agricultural sector, already weakened by farmers' indebtedness and heavy dependency on

⁹ Sources: *Cyprus, General Abstracts of the Census of 1931*, (Nicosia: Government Printing Office, 1932); *Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of Cyprus, 1931* (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1932). Part of the features presented here refer to seasonal work, as a large part of the population, mostly peasants seeking paid work when not working on the land, had two or more occupations.

export trade, witnessed a further decline in the prices of primary products and a further increase in the rates charged by moneylenders. This again resulted in an increase in forced sales of land and property.¹⁰ A significant number of landless ex-proprietors, who started working in mines and quarries, emerged from these developments. Two large mining companies operated on the island, the American Cyprus Mines Corporation and the Cypriot Cyprus and General Asbestos Company.¹¹ The impoverished peasants of the early 1930s also looked for employment in smaller, urban-based companies, such as the American Cyprus Sulphur and Copper Company, the Greek Hellenic Company of Chemical Products and Manures and the British-Swedish Cyprus Chrome Company, and in factories manufacturing bricks, tiles, cigarettes, soap, and other products.¹² Finally, some workers were employed in the construction sector, mainly in works for the improvement of the road network.

An examination of the numbers of male workers employed in agriculture and in industrial production, and their respective proportion in the working male population from the early 1910s until the end of the 1950s indicates two trends: a general decrease in the agricultural population and an expansion in the number of production workers. As shown in the following table, the proportion of male workers in agriculture had been constantly falling since at least 1921. As the concomitant trends of relocation of peasants to urban areas and detachment from agriculture were growing, the Cypriot working class was acquiring ever more discrete and concrete characteristics.

¹⁰ See Surridge, 1930, pp. 35-44; Sir Ralph Oakden, *Report on the Finances and Economic Resources of Cyprus* (London: 1935), 104-108.

¹¹ The Cyprus Mines Corporation was founded in 1916 and run by the Mudd family in Los Angeles. The management of the company had close relations with the Cyprus Government, with which it collaborated throughout the 1930s and 1940s against labour unrest. The Cyprus and General Asbestos Company was owned by the Koukoulla family. Rappas, 2008, p. 232; NA, FCO 141/2628, *Trade Unions; attitude of mining companies towards formation of*, meeting of mine managers with the Nicosia Commissioner, 31 March 1939.

¹² The Hellenic Company of Chemical Products and Manures was owned by the Bodosakis family.

Table 3. Agriculture and Production Male Workforce in Cyprus, 1911-1960¹³

	Male agricultural workers		Male production workers	
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
1911	49700	64	11400	15
1921	53600	63	13500	16
1931	55300	56	16900	17
1946	55200	41	28500	21
1960	43300	26	54300	34

Already in the 1920s, Cyprus was experiencing a still small-scale but observable socio-economic transformation, which led to the emergence of new social and political forces. The emergence of a class of landless agriculturalists, seasonal mines workers and craftsmen was disruptive to the established social equilibrium, and signalled that the proletarianization of the impoverished peasantry was under way. This working class began to formulate its demands through the labour movement, emerging tentatively during the second half of the decade, under the influence of local communist organizers.

The First Labour Organizations and the Communist Party of Cyprus

During the 1920s, growing popular discontent, coupled with the growth of the labour force, had laid the foundation for the first occurrences of labour action on the island. While the confrontation between intransigent and moderate unionists occupied the attention of the Greek-

¹³ Source: John Jones, *The population of Cyprus: demographic trends and socio-economic influences* (Southampton: Camelot Press Ltd, 1983), 143 (data taken from the censuses of 1911, 1921, 1931, 1946 and 1960). The category 'production workers' includes here workers in manufacturing, processing and repairing. The divergences between the data of tables 2 and 3 are due to differences in the method of occupations' categorization and the fact that the data of table 3 refer to the male workforce only.

Cypriot elite, a new, organized, left-wing political space would emerge. By the early 1930s, the Cypriot Left had come out in opposition to bourgeois politics, and had developed a militant, secular, non-nationalist political discourse.

The first trade unions appeared in Limassol, where the first labour actions also took place. The town had a long tradition in the formation of *syntechniai* (guilds) and other associations from the late 1880s, and had been the manufacturing centre of the island as well as the centre of the rising bourgeoisie since the 1910s.¹⁴ Being a port town, Limassol lay outside the reach of the traditionalist landowning elites and the Church, so it evolved into the main locus of new ideas and information on international developments. Limassol became the point of arrival on the island for a number of the ideological currents that included *dimotikismos*,¹⁵ socialism and communism. These reached the town mainly through Greek ships from Athens and Alexandria.¹⁶

In the late 1910s, two pioneers of Cypriot socialism, G. Iliades and P. Fasouliotes, joined the Λαϊκή Συνεργατική Ένωση [People's Cooperative Union – LSE], a club in Limassol that aimed at teaching workers how to build up savings.¹⁷ Following the tradition of such clubs that

¹⁴ During the second half of the 1880s and the 1890s, voluntary associations of tradesmen and master-craftsmen named variously as brotherhoods, saving societies and guilds, replaced *esnafs* (guilds) and other traditional institutions of the Ottoman period. Their main role was to regulate relations between masters on the one hand and journeymen and apprentices on the other. At the turn of the twentieth century, some more organized associations were formed, such as the Cypriot Teaching Association, while more organized forms of blue-collar labour associations appeared in the mid-1910s. Some associations of this period, such as builders and dockers in Limassol, put forward more militant claims, and backed them by strikes and other forms of concentrated actions. Nevertheless, such associations remained composed of both employees and employers, and they functioned mainly as vehicles for the – usually electoral – interests of their founders. Katsiaounis, 'Labour, Society and Politics in Cyprus during the second half of the nineteenth century' (King's College London D Phil Thesis, 1996), pp. 285-299; Fantis, 2005, p. 52; Christos Zavros, *Από την ιστορία του κυπριακού συνδικαλιστικού κινήματος* [From the history of the Cypriot trade union movement] (London: Venus Printers Ltd, 2000), 11; Pan-Cypriot Labour Federation, *Συμβολή στη μελέτη της ιστορίας του συντεχνιακού κινήματος της Κύπρου* [Contribution to the study of the history of the trade union movement of Cyprus] (PEO publications, 1958), p. 6.

¹⁵ The intellectual trend of linguistic *dimotikismos* arrived in Limassol during the 1910s. Its advocates supported a 'popular' version of Greek (*dimotiki*) and opposed a 'pure', or archaic, version of the language (*katharevousa*). Both in Greece, where it originated, and in Cyprus this linguistic conflict took on a political dimension, as *katharevousa* was seen by *dimotikistes* (the advocates of *dimotiki*) as an elite language, incomprehensible to the people. From within the group of *dimotikistes*, a group emerged at the end of the 1910s in Limassol which was attracted by the Russian Revolution and saw the struggle for a language of the people linked with the struggle for the liberation of the lower classes. See Yiannis Lefkis, *Οι ρίζες: ιστορική μελέτη* [The roots: historical study] (Limassol, 1984), pp. 45-50.

¹⁶ According to Yiannis Lefkis, one of the first members of the Communist Party, communist books, newspapers and periodicals were secretly brought to Limassol by ships' stewards. Describing his own experience, he notes that he was first made aware of *Humanité* by stewards working for the French shipping company Messageries Maritimes, who distributed the newspaper in the town. Lefkis, 1984, pp. 63 and 109.

¹⁷ Alexis Alekou, 'Η ίδρυση του ΚΚΚ, 1926 (The foundation of the ΚΚΚ, 1926)', in Giorgos Georgis and Giannos Katsourides (eds.), *Η Κυπριακή Αριστερά στην Πρώτη Περίοδο της Βρετανικής Αποικιοκρατίας: Εμφάνιση,*

were flourishing at the beginning of the century, the LSE functioned as a venue for public meetings and lectures. Although the club initially tried to avoid involvement in politics, the two socialists had soon formed a group around them, and became active in publishing political articles and organizing lectures on socialism and the French Revolution. The socialist group gradually acquired significant influence in the town, and in April 1919, at the instigation of Fasouliotes, construction workers founded the first union with an aim of defending the professional interests of its members. A year later, Fasouliotes was elected as president of the LSE, illustrating the influence of the socialist group within the club.¹⁸

In 1922, reacting to the success of the group, part of the Greek-Cypriot elite moved to establish the People's and Farmers' Association, aiming at splitting the LSE.¹⁹ Although the attempt was not successful, the socialist group itself decided to dissolve the LSE. Cypriot socialists moved from operating within progressive clubs to actively promoting trade unions as an organizational model. In the same year, the socialist group, which had now been reformed as the Εργατικό Κόμμα [Labour Party], began the publication of the newspaper *Pyrros* [Torch] under the editorship of Fasouliotes. As described in a 1923 article, the goal of the party was to mobilize workers and peasants with a view to establishing a socialist state.²⁰ The party further denounced the politics of the Church and the Greek-Cypriot elite and rejected enosis, on the grounds that Greek capitalism would exploit the Cypriot lower classes as much as the British.

The new party brought together intellectuals and skilled workers of different ideological origins, including socialists, communists and δημοτικιστές [dimotikistes]. Soon after its foundation, it was rocked by a conflict over its ideological and organizational direction. From 1923, the communists began developing a distinct faction in opposition to the socialist group, which drew inspiration directly from the British Labour Party. The communist group soon prevailed within the party and by the end of the year it had been renamed as the Κυπριακό Εργατικό και Αγροτικό Κόμμα (Κομμουνιστικό) [Cypriot Labour-Peasant Party (Communist)].²¹

Συγκρότηση, Εξέλιξη [The Cypriot Left during the First Period of British Colonialism: Emergence, Formation, Development] (Athens: Taxideftis, 2013), 91.

¹⁸ The construction workers union was the first to adopt a charter stating that membership to the union was open to all workers, irrespective of their ethnicity or gender. *History of the PSE-PEO*, 1991, p. 14.

¹⁹ Lefkis, 1984, pp. 63-65.

²⁰ *History of the PSE-PEO*, 1991, p.15.

²¹ The affiliation of the Cypriot Labour Party with the British Labour Party was declared in the first issue of *Pyrros* in 1922. Lefkis, 1984, p. 66.

In the following year, the communist faction, which was by now numbering 35 members, named their organization Κομμουνιστικό Κόμμα Κύπρου [Communist Party of Cyprus - KKK] and applied for membership to the Communist International. In the same period, Fasouliotes was expelled from the party.²²

Meanwhile, five more unions were founded under the influence of the party, modelled after the construction workers union.²³ In early 1925, the unions joined together to form the Εργατικό Κέντρο Λεμεσού [Limassol Labour Centre], which came to replace the LSE. The Centre, whose charter was written in both Greek and Turkish, created a public space where Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot workers could meet and organize. The Centre also held classes and lectures on labour issues and political questions. Although technically separate, the Centre was directly influenced by the Communist Party. It soon became very popular with local workers, as indicated by the significant amount of workers participating in its activities. A few weeks after its foundation, organizers from Limassol assisted in the establishment of a Labour Centre in Nicosia.²⁴

From 1925 and throughout the 1920s, the Centre held celebrations on May Day, which took the form of a public festival for the workers. In 1925 and 1926, participants in celebrations published resolutions that called for unity among Turkish- and Greek-Cypriot workers, and codified the demands of the nascent labour movement: freedom to establish trade unions as well as the legal recognition of existing trade unions, an increase in daily wages, the introduction of an eight-hour work-day; compensation for work accidents and dismissals; protective legislation for working women and the abolition of child labour. The 1926 resolution demanded government measures to reduce unemployment, and proposed the establishment of a fund for workers' healthcare and called for reform of the taxation system.²⁵

²² After his expulsion, Fasouliotes founded in 1925 the short-lived Εργατοαγροτικό Κόμμα [Labour-peasant Party] and issued the party newspaper *Paratiritis* [Observer]. Katsourides, 2009, pp. 386-387.

²³ These were the union of barbers, the union of bakery workers, the union of carpenters, the union of tailor workers and the union of unskilled construction workers. During 1922-23, the unions of construction workers, bakery workers and tailor workers went on a strike that led to the partial achievement of their demands. Lefkis, 1984, pp. 61-63 and 171-172; CSA, SA1/950/1923, *The Limassol Builder Association*, Police report, 27 June 1923.

²⁴ According to Lefkis, the first lecture organized in the Limassol Centre was on working conditions in Russia and was attended by 500 persons. Lefkis, 1984, p. 131.

²⁵ *History of the PSE-PEO*, 1991, pp. 20-21; CSA, SA1/935/1926, Declaration of the Centre, 1 May 1926.

The growing appeal of the Centre and the Communist Party became evident in the 1926 municipal elections. Notably, the candidates supported by the Greek-Cypriot elite attempted to appeal to the workers during the pre-election period, and asked to give speeches at the Centre.²⁶ Although some of the workers were in favour of adopting a neutral position in the upcoming elections, the majority ultimately decided to hold their own candidates. For the first time, the Left would be participating in the institutional framework of established politics. The three candidates of the Centre received about 15% of the vote. In repeat elections a year later, the candidates of the Centre, now supported openly by the Communist Party, received 14% of the vote.²⁷ In the 1930 municipal elections in Limassol, the candidates of the Communist Party again received about the same share of the vote, indicating that the Left had managed to create a distinct political space in the town.

By mid-1931, trade unions had been established in all towns of the island, and Labour Centres had also been founded in Famagusta and Larnaca. Cypriot workers had also founded a central organization aiming at the financial support of persecuted workers, the Εργατική Βοήθεια Κύπρου [Cyprus Workers' Support].²⁸ The Cypriot labour organizations had by now adopted a standardized structure and declared their purpose: to advance labour rights and to represent the interests of the emerging working class. In the eyes of the law, however, due to the government's refusal to recognize the existence of the labour question in line with the then Labour Party's colonial labour policy, they were seen as informal associations similar to clubs and trade companies.²⁹

Most importantly, the trade unions and labour actions mobilized both Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots, and constituted the principal field of inter-communal cooperation. As indicated in the trade union resolutions, this was considered a precondition for successfully winning labour rights. Seeking to promote the interests of the working class as a whole, the emerging labour movement was in stark opposition to the politics of the two communities' elites.

²⁶ Lefkis, 1984, p. 135.

²⁷ Protopapas, 2012, pp. 275-276.

²⁸ CSA, SA1/607/1931, Famagusta sub-Inspector of Police's report, 20 July 1931; Nicosia Commandant of Police's report, 13 August 1931.

²⁹ The first coherent attempt of the second Labour government (1929-1931) to devise guidelines on labour issues was made in early 1931. The initiative, however, was abandoned in August of the same year when the National Government was formed. Stephen Ashton and Sarah Stockwell, *Imperial policy and colonial practice, 1925-1945* (London: HMSO, 1996), lxxxiv-lxxxv.

Labour politics were uniting Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots at the grassroots level, thus challenging the established ethno-religious boundaries. Gravely concerned about the influence of the communist-affiliated trade unions, the Greek-Cypriot elite attempted until the 1931 revolt to form rival, anti-communist and nationalist trade unions with very limited success.³⁰

Alongside their efforts to organize the labour movement, Cypriot communists moved to consolidate their position on the island through solidifying their own distinct structures. The Founding Congress of the Communist Party of Cyprus took place in 1926, yet the political programme of the KKK had been made public much earlier. It had been published on New Year's Day in 1925 in the first issue of the party's newspaper, *Neos Anthropos* [*New Man*]. The text described the goals and positions of the party regarding the political and economic situation on the island, the Cypriot political elites and the national question:

Our first concern is to eliminate any racial hatred that exists between the inhabitants of our island, to teach the masses that the people should no longer think themselves Greeks and Turks and remain at each other's throats over the glories of their respective motherlands, but as poor and plutocrats... [W]e will oppose all ... nationalist politicians and will work for the independence of Cyprus under a workers' and peasants' government...³¹

The emergence of the Communist Party and its discourse, radically opposed to that of the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot elites, constituted a major change for Cypriot politics. The party addressed the entirety of workers and peasants on the island, and called for their collective organization on a class basis, aspiring to form a bi-communal political space. Although antagonistic to both communities' elites, the KKK's main front within the local political context was against the Greek-Cypriot leadership. The 'nationalist politicians' whom the KKK opposed were mostly those supported by the Church and the Greek-Cypriot elite, rather than the emerging Kemalist nationalist elite of the Turkish-Cypriot community. Accordingly, the demand for independence was in essence a response to enosis, not to the pro-British position of the traditionalist Turkish-Cypriot elite. This should be partly attributed to the fact that the party's

³⁰ In September 1931, the *Limassol Labour Federation* was founded, the charter of which stated that its members should not be communists. CSA, SA1/1039/1931, Limassol Commandant of Police's report, 28 September 1931.

³¹ *Neos Anthropos*, 'Our programme', 1 January 1925.

leadership consisted exclusively of Greek-Cypriots and that its appeal to Turkish-Cypriots was limited – a failure recognized by the KKK itself at its Second Congress in November 1928.³²

Although the KKK focused mainly on the emerging working class both in political and organizational terms, the party attempted from its very early days to expand its influence among the rural population as well. As early as 1924, representatives of the communist group participated in a conference for small landowners, proposing a demand for the five-year suspension of the debts that had been accrued during the First World War. In the following period, the party put forward a series of measures that would allow for the economic recovery of the peasants. These included the abolition of the Tribute, the reform of the taxation system, the establishment of an agricultural bank and the expropriation of monastery and Church lands. Similar proposals were put forward at the First Congress of the party, which further asked for the enactment of legislation providing for disposal of the budget surplus for low-interest loans to be given to small landowners.³³

Despite the KKK's efforts, and although the influence of the traditionalist politicians was waning in the context of growing popular discontent, the party's positions on religion and against enosis alienated a large number of peasants. The party's calls for the abolition of private property and the expropriation of Church property, as well as its philosophical adoption of atheism, resulted in a constant polemic from the traditionalist elite and especially the Church.³⁴ Given that the economic survival of the peasantry was to a great extent dependent on the Church, as it was the island's biggest landowner, the KKK's attempts to appeal to the rural population remained largely unsuccessful.

In August 1926, the party moved to convene its Founding Congress, with the assistance of members of the Communist Party of Greece, which had been formally founded two years earlier. The Congress was attended by about 25 delegates who represented the KKK's organizations across the island, the recently founded Κομμουνιστική Νεολαία [Communist

³² *Political Decisions*, Second Congress of the KKK, pp. 41-49, Decision on the report of the Central Committee.

³³ *Political Decisions*, First Congress of the KKK, 14-15 August 1926, pp. 23-40.

³⁴ The KKK rejected religion in principle, and denounced the economic and political role of the Church. It opposed only the higher clergy, however, not religion or faith as such. Articles in *Neos Anthropos* accused the Church of serving the capitalists' interests, while Jesus Christ was characterized as a great revolutionist. *Neos Anthropos*, 'What is our attitude towards religion', 1 March 1925; 'Plutocracy and clericalism', 25 April 1925; 'The Church, at the service of the capitalist regime', 25 April 1925.

Youth] and the Κομμουνιστική Ένωση Γυναικών [Women's Communist Association].³⁵ The Congress debated political, economic and organizational questions, and approved the party's charter: the purpose of the KKK was the improvement of the economic condition and the organization of workers and peasants; the independence of Cyprus from Britain; and the establishment of the Labour-Peasant Soviet Republic of Cyprus.³⁶ Furthermore, the party aimed to coordinate the Cypriot labour and peasant movement with the international labour movement, especially within the British Empire. The specific goals set for the labour movement were modelled on the demands codified at the Limassol Labour Centre's resolution on May Day a few months earlier. At the same time, the Congress also stressed the need for the establishment of more trade unions, and stated self-critically that they should be independent from the party. The positions and decisions of the Congress were codified in a manifesto, addressed to the Cypriot people, which denounced enosis and called for the island's independence. Moreover, the Congress elected a central committee for the party; its first action was to submit a protest to the government, demanding the abolition of all measures taken in the previous period against the KKK and its members.³⁷

Government concern about communist activities had begun since their very first appearance on the island and had predated the official foundation of the Communist Party by some years. As early as 1923, the police stopped a group of allegedly communist unemployed workers who attempted to raise funds in Limassol.³⁸ Since then, all activities of suspected communists were closely supervised and direct measures against them were often taken.³⁹ In mid-1925, the government deported a leading figure of the party, Nicos Yiavopoulos, and a few months later imprisoned the editor of *Neos Anthropos*, forcing the temporary suspension of the newspaper's circulation.⁴⁰ In the same year, the police entered the KKK's offices, and houses of

³⁵ Lefkis, 1984, pp. 213-219; Perdios, 1968, p. 29.

³⁶ CSA, SA1/1678/26, *Communist Party of Cyprus. Articles of Association*, 29 December 1926.

³⁷ NA, FCO 141/2404, *protest forwarded to the Government for transmission to the Secretary of State*, General Secretary of the KKK to Governor Malcolm Stevenson, 19 October 1926.

³⁸ Five years later, contributions and donations were prohibited under the 1928 Criminal Code. CSA, SA1/594/1923, *Bolshevism. Alleged existence of – in Limassol*, Limassol Commissioner to the Chief Secretary, 12 March 1923.

³⁹ See CSA, SA1/607/1931, *Communist activities; Police reports etc.*; NA, FCO 141/2455, *Spread of communism in the colony; measures taken for its suppression*, 1931-1959.

⁴⁰ The editor of *Neos Anthropos* was later released and imprisoned again a few months later, causing again the temporary suspension of the newspaper's circulation. *Neos Anthropos* had often become the target also of the Greek-Cypriot elite and faced lawsuits against its content. See CSA, SA1/1444/1927, *Seditious articles in 'Neos*

party members, seized all printed material and arrested leading communists.⁴¹ Such operations, as well as searches of suspected communists, were common, while in many cases the authorities censored the correspondence of party members, as well as public party documents.⁴² Furthermore, the police kept a special registry with information on all communists on the island. The Colonial Secretary cooperated with police authorities in Greece and Egypt to track movements of communists.⁴³ Notably, the police had managed to infiltrate the party and was constantly informed of the KKK's plans and activities, while it was always present at trade union and communist party meetings.⁴⁴

Most significantly, in 1928, the government amended the Criminal Code with the intention of suppressing the party's activities. The new Code was specifically 'directed against the revolutionary and subversive methods and doctrines of Communism', and stated that an association that advocated for the violent overthrow of the colony's constitution or government, or encouraged any other seditious intention, would be considered unlawful and its members would be liable to imprisonment.⁴⁵ As numerous party documents had called for the end of British rule, the party could be outlawed and its members imprisoned whenever needed. Following the enactment of the new Code, the government prohibited the circulation of certain communist books. Five years later, the Code would be amended again, so as to outlaw the party and all its affiliated organizations completely.⁴⁶ In 1930, the government enacted legislation that obliged all newspaper editors to submit the sum of £200 as a guarantee for continuing the

Anthropos'; *Neos Anthropos*, 'The trial of Neos Anthropos', 15 May 1925; 'Neos Anthropos in court', 1 July 1925; *Eleftheria*, 'Libel trial', 16 July 1927.

⁴¹ *Eleftheria*, 'Arrest of communists and seizure of their correspondence and books', 25 November 1925.

⁴² NA, FCO 141/2606, *Police reports on communism*, report 'Brief History of Communism in Cyprus', 28 February 1941; Lefkis, 1984, p. 125; Perdios, 1968, p. 24.

⁴³ CSA, SA1/1192/1930, *Question as to whether communists can be supplied with certificates of good conduct*, Chief Commandant of Police to the Colonial Secretary, 18 August 1930.

⁴⁴ The police reports to the colonial administration contain specific details concerning the place, time and the number of participants in trade union gatherings. Special mentions were made for committee members and their ideological positions. *Neos Anthropos*, 'The celebration of May Day at the Labour Centre', 21 May 1927; CSA, SA1/1039/1931, *Trade Union Movement in Cyprus*, reports of Commandants of Police, late 1931; CSA, SA1/1078/1931, *Communist School-teachers*, Limassol Commandant of Police to the Chief Commandant, 11 September 1931.

⁴⁵ NA, FCO 141/2455, Attorney General's memorandum on the 1933 Criminal Code, 4 March 1933; *The Cyprus Gazette*, 1928, Laws Nos. 15 and 37, pp. 298-299 and 581-582.

⁴⁶ *Neos Anthropos*, 'The prohibited books', 12 September 1928.

publication of their newspapers, causing the permanent suspension of *Neos Anthropos*' circulation.⁴⁷

By the beginning of the 1930s, however, the KKK had successfully secured its position as a significant political force on the island. In the 1930 elections for the Legislative Council, candidates supported by the KKK received about 16% of the vote. During the same period, there is evidence that KKK also managed to extend its influence among the Turkish-Cypriot community more successfully, triggering the reaction of the modernist Kemalist Turkish-Cypriot intelligentsia. In mid-1931, Turkish-Cypriot speakers participated in several meetings organized by the KKK in Limassol, Nicosia and Paphos, which were attended by members of both communities.⁴⁸ In July of the same year, the KKK held a meeting in Paphos at a Turkish-Cypriot coffee-shop. The meeting was originally scheduled to take place in a Greek-Cypriot coffee-shop, but changed venue, when the owner was threatened by men sent by the mayor and the town's bishop. A few days later, leading Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot communists addressed an appeal to the workers of the town, stressing the need for bi-communal cooperation in labour mobilizations. That appeal caused the reaction of the newspapers *Hakikat* [Truth] and *Söz*, which denounced the participation of Turkish-Cypriots in the Communist Party, and stressed that communism constituted a threat for both the community and Turkey.⁴⁹ In August of the same year, *Söz* published an article entitled 'Whoever leaves the congregation will be devoured by the Wolf'. The article emphasized that the communist movement on the island was instigated by Greek-Cypriots and promoted Greek-Cypriot nationalism.⁵⁰

4.2 Government Policy and Labour Organization

Although the KKK did not play a major role in the outbreak of the October revolt and the riots that followed, the events provided an ideal opportunity for the British to take action against the

⁴⁷ *The Cyprus Gazette*, 1930, Law No. 23, 'Newspapers, Books and Printing Presses Law', pp. 761-772, section 4. The law was apparently amended in order to force *Neos Anthropos* to close down. The newspaper and the KKK attempted to collect the sum required through donations and subscriptions but failed; no other newspaper closed down due to this provision of the law.

⁴⁸ Panayiotou, 1999, p. 236.

⁴⁹ CSA, SA1/607/1931, Paphos Commandant of Police's to the Chief Commandant, 21/7 and 4 August 1931; Nevzat, 2005, p. 329.

⁵⁰ CSA, SA1/517/1926, article in *Söz*, 13 August 1931.

party. The colonial authorities introduced a series of repressive measures against the KKK, most of which had been discussed in the previous period. Following the revolt, the government outlawed the party itself as well as all organizations affiliated with it, and attempted to suppress its activities in total. In this context of illegality and repression, the KKK channelled its action mainly through the trade unions. The party successfully maintained its leading role in the labour movement during the 1930s, making sure that its appeal would keep growing.

Within a few days of the outbreak of the revolt, the colonial authorities arrested many leading figures of the party. On 25 October, a demonstration of about 400 persons outside the Nicosia Labour Centre protesting against the arrests of communist leaders was dispersed by soldiers. The Centre was ransacked and the KKK offices sealed.⁵¹ Three days later, the remaining leaders of the party were also arrested. By early November, Charalambos Vatis, who had played a leading role in the October revolt, and Costas Christodoulides (known as Skeleas), General Secretary of the KKK since 1925, were deported. About 50 more cadres were imprisoned or internally exiled.⁵² A few weeks later, the government also took measures to keep foreign communists, especially Greek nationals from Greece, Egypt, Syria and Turkey, from coming to the island.⁵³ From 1932 until early 1934, almost all known cadres of the KKK were arrested and tried on charges of seditious conspiracy. They were internally exiled or received sentences of up to four years' imprisonment.⁵⁴

⁵¹ CSA, SA1/726/32, *Alleged terror-inspiring methods of governing. Protest by Tefkros Anthias against-*, mid-1932; Grekos, 1994, p. 13.

⁵² NA, CO 883 August 5, *Correspondence relating to the disturbances in Cyprus*, Governor Storrs to Secretary of State James Thomas, 26 October 1931; NA, CO 67/242/4, *Riots in Cyprus: reports by Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean*, report of 16 November 1931; NA, CO 67/240/15, Governor to Secretary of State Cunliffe-Lister, 2 December 1931; NA, CO 67/240/14, *Riots in Cyprus: deportations*; CSA, SA1/1235/1932, *Riots 1931. List of persons interned in the various districts*.

⁵³ According to information submitted to the Secretary of State two communist agents attempted to arrive in Cyprus via Egypt in November 1931. At the same time, Greek and Cypriot communists carried out their secret correspondence through various routes, usually via Alexandria and Port Said, but also via Beirut and Marseille. NA, FCO 141/2455, correspondence among the Secretary of State, the Cyprus Governor, the High Commissioner of Egypt, the Minister Plenipotentiary of the British Legation at Athens, the General Consuls of Alexandria, Cairo and Port-Said, December 1931 - February 1932; report by the General Staff Intelligence, Headquarters of British troops in Egypt, 15 February 1932.

⁵⁴ CSA, SA1/1235/1932, Chief Commandant of Police to the Colonial Secretary, 8 March 1934; CSA, SA1/433/33, *Kyprodemos Hji Nicola of Psomolophou. Proposed internment of -*, reports on internment orders, 1933; NA, CO 537/2639, *Communist activities in the colonies: Cyprus*, report by the Security Intelligence Middle East (SIME) 'The AKEL party', 13 April 1948; Grekos, 1994, pp. 14-17.

As the poet Tefkros Anthias, a party member, stressed in his protest to the Governor in mid-1932, communists were often flogged with whips and clubs by the police, in order to force their cooperation against arrested party cadres:

The organs of order [policemen] ... [have treated the Communists] with ... Inquisitional measures, with cruel flogging with whips and clubs, searching for false evidence against the pioneers of the Communist party... They whip and beat them ... until they bleed and they insult them most vulgarly.⁵⁵

Anthias also stressed that in many cases the authorities detained communist workers for days and charged them with offences which were eventually not tried due to lack of evidence.

In 1932, police interrupted the preparations for the May Day celebrations in Nicosia, arresting about 20 Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots; two of the detainees were severely beaten while in police custody.⁵⁶ The event received extensive publicity within Cyprus, but also reached the House of Commons, with James Maxton, an MP of the Independent Labour Party, criticizing the Secretary of State, Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, and requesting an inquiry into the circumstances of the event.⁵⁷ The inquiry that followed eventually confirmed, as expected, the government's allegations. The publicity given to the workers' reports incited the criticism of the colonial authorities. The Attorney General and the Chief Commander of Police asked the Colonial Secretary to ensure that reports on police practices in Cyprus were not made available to British MPs in the future. Only such discretion would allow it to deal effectively with the communists, the 'enemies of the State'.⁵⁸ The government's determination to suppress the KKK's activities would be demonstrated in the following period, when the relevant measures that had been debated prior to the October revolt would take full effect.

Up until the revolt, the authorities had difficulty obtaining sufficient evidence against communists, while the government complained that the courts in many cases took a very lenient view of communist activities.⁵⁹ In August 1931, the Chief Commander of Police proposed that

⁵⁵ CSA, SA1/726/32, protest by Anthias, mid-1932.

⁵⁶ CSA, SA1/900/32, *Alleged arrest and ill treatment by the police of certain persons*, reports by the two assaulted workers, May 1932.

⁵⁷ *Hansard, House of Commons Debates*, 267 (27 June 1932), cc. 1477-8, question by Maxton and answer by the Under-Secretary of State.

⁵⁸ CSA, SA1/900/32, Attorney General to the Colonial Secretary, 17 August 1932.

⁵⁹ NA, FCO 141/2455, Acting Governor to Secretary of State Lord Passfield, 21 August 1931. The Acting Governor referred specifically to the unsuccessful prosecution of Vatis in the summer of 1931. Vatis was charged under the

the government amend the Criminal Code again, so as to outlaw all communist and fellow-traveller organizations. The Commander also suggested the introduction of further legislation that would prohibit the appointment of Cypriots to Soviet commercial agencies on the island, and would empower banks to sequester accounts that belonged to communists.⁶⁰ A few days later, the Acting Governor proposed that the Secretary of State should pass legislation that would further restrict communist publications, introduce the censorship of telegram correspondence of communists and deport non-Cypriot communists from the island.⁶¹ The Attorney General further proposed that such legislation should extend to Cypriot communists, and suggested that the laws recently passed in Greece against communist activities and associations could be used as a model for Cyprus.⁶²

Cyprus was the first British colony to legislate comprehensively against communist activities. As Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, Secretary of State, noted himself, the 1931 revolt was an ideal opportunity for the British to apply such legislation, despite the very minor role played by the KKK in the events.⁶³ By the end of 1932, legislation had been enacted providing for the deportation of Cypriot and non-Cypriot communists and other undesirable persons from the island. The authorities banned communist and other seditious publications, and prohibited political meetings and the assembly of more than five persons.⁶⁴

Most importantly, in 1933, the Criminal Code was re-amended, so as 'to enable the Government to deal effectively with the menace of Communism'.⁶⁵ The new Code empowered the Governor to ban outright any organization that had among its aims the promotion of a general strike.⁶⁶ Furthermore persons charged with taking part in or encouraging the activities of an unlawful association would from then on be triable in a court of Assizes, and the possession of seditious printed material became an offence. The amendments also gave additional powers of search, seizure of documents and arrest to the police. The day after the enactment of the

Criminal Code on two speeches he gave in Limassol and Nicosia but the trial which followed resulted in his acquittal.

⁶⁰ NA, FCO 141/2455, Chief Commandant of Police to the Colonial Secretary, 10 August 1931.

⁶¹ Ibid., Acting Governor to the Secretary of State, 21 August 1931.

⁶² Ibid., Attorney General to the Colonial Secretary, 5 and 15 September 1931.

⁶³ Ibid., Secretary of State Cunliffe-Lister to Governor Storrs, 21 March 1932.

⁶⁴ See *The Cyprus Gazette*, 1932, Laws Nos. 9, 54, and 68, pp. 99-100, 743-745, and 908-909.

⁶⁵ NA, CO 67/250/12, *The Cyprus Criminal Code (Amendment) Law, 1933*, Objects and Reasons.

⁶⁶ *The Cyprus Gazette*, 1933, Law No. 35, pp. 531-535, sections 2 to 6. It is noteworthy that section 5 of the Law used deliberately the word 'proclamation', as the KKK frequently so described its publications.

amendments, the government proscribed the KKK and all organizations affiliated to it.⁶⁷ In August of the same year, further legislation providing for the censorship of telegram correspondence was enacted, followed by a law providing for the suspension of newspapers' publication a year later.⁶⁸

By the mid-1930s, the KKK had suffered a severe blow. Most party cadres had been imprisoned and most underground activities of the now leaderless KKK had been suppressed.⁶⁹ The party's printed material and newspapers had been declared seditious, their publication suspended, and their illegal distribution could only be limited.⁷⁰ Moreover, party members and supporters were excluded from job offers and promotions and were often suspended or dismissed. In this context, the party developed a double-action policy: a small-scale underground activity, consisting of setting up illegal cells and distributing proclamations; and a legal one, that is channelling its action through the labour movement. Until the end of the 1930s, trade unionism, which was treated differently by the government in comparison to communist activity, became the main organizational structure for the party to re-establish its presence on the island.

Towards the Consolidation of the Labour Movement

At the end of the 1910s and during the 1920s, Britain and many other European countries came to recognize trade unions as social partners and participants in the planning of social policy. This development can be predominantly attributed to the socio-economic effects of the First World War and the impact of the October Revolution on European politics. The Treaty of Versailles in 1919 provided for the establishment of the International Labour Organization. The organization aimed at promoting a new direction in trade unionism, opposing that advocated by the

⁶⁷ *The Cyprus Gazette*, 1933, p. 534.

⁶⁸ See *The Cyprus Gazette*, 1933, Law No. 29, pp. 469-478; *Ibid.*, 1934, Law No. 26, pp. 367-380.

⁶⁹ Some of the internment orders were cancelled in mid-1934, as the new Criminal Code gave increased control to the government over communism. The decision was taken after 12 interned communists were convicted for seditious conspiracy. CSA, SA1/1235/1932, correspondence between the Colonial Secretary and the Chief Commandant of Police, September 1933 - May 1934; cancellation orders, mid-1934.

⁷⁰ During 1932-1933, the newspaper *Ergatiki Allileggii* [*Labour Solidarity*] and all other leftist newspapers were closed down under the Seditious Publications Law. Some of them continued to be circulated in secret, though in very limited numbers. The KKK and the Communist Youth also continued circulating printed material throughout the 1930s, leading to arrests of several party members. Grekos, 1994, p. 16; CSA, SA1/726/32, protest by Tefkros Anthias, mid-1932.

Comintern, so as to address the post-war crisis and at the same time control the expansion of communism. Because of their membership in the ILO, Britain and other colonial powers were typically obliged to apply its guidelines on labour policy in the colonies. Nevertheless, the extension of the labour question in the colonies was not recognized, and labour legislation in British overseas territories would not be introduced before the 1930s. Britain's overall colonial social policy was after all predominantly defined by economic priorities and precondition for the introduction of a new institutional framework was that it would leave economic policy intact.

In the mid-1930s, the global economic crisis created the potential for extensive social and labour unrest. This gradual development led Britain to redefine its colonial labour policy, with colonial officials deciding that legal oversight over the labour movement would be more effective than direct repression.⁷¹ In this context, and despite the objections of the Cyprus government, labour legislation on the island was reluctantly introduced in 1932. The first decisive steps towards the introduction of worker's rights and the protection of workers would only be taken during the last decade of colonial rule on the island, under the pressure of the labour movement.⁷² As late as May 1938, Governor Palmer stressed to the Secretary of State:

I note that you urge the enactment of further legislation to provide for the establishment of wage-fixing machinery and for the compulsory payment of compensation to injured workmen... But in this connection I desire to emphasize the very serious danger even to the present degree of economic progress and development, which any too drastic and too direct interference with labour conditions ... might occasion.⁷³

As in all colonies, the government considered that Cypriot society, being essentially uneducated and backward, was not ready for extensive, modern labour legislation. In 1941, while discussing the planned reform of the trade union regulatory framework, the Acting Governor argued that:

[T]rade unions of Cyprus are in a backward state educationally and politically. It is a misuse of terms to call the present combinations of various workers here trade unions, if by that is meant something comparable to trade unions in England... Their officials have little ability... Most of the members are ... mentally ... groping in the dark and pursuing imperfectly understood ideas... The trade unions

⁷¹ See Ashton and Stockwell, 1996, pp. lxxxv-xcii.

⁷² The labour legislation was until then restricted to the Mines Regulations Law, enacted in 1882 and amended in 1925 and 1928; the Shop Hours and the Hours of Employment Laws of 1927; and the Protection of Female Domestic Servants and the Employment of Young Persons and Children Laws of 1928.

⁷³ NA, FCO 141/2573, *Supervision of conditions governing employment of labour in colonial Dependencies*, Governor Palmer to Secretary of State Ormsby-Gore, 8 May 1938.

here [do not] understand collective bargaining... I must admit to grave misgivings as to the wisdom of granting ... wide powers and privileges to the trade unions in their present undeveloped and uneducated state...⁷⁴

Besides, the government did not recognize the presence of any class distinction on the island and denied the existence of a distinct working class.

The 1932 Trade Union Law stood as the first institutional framework for trade unionism in Cyprus. The law reflected official scepticism as the government attempted to control the expansion and militancy of the labour movement on the island as well as restrict communist influence over the unionists. The law provided that trade unions should be registered within two months of their formation, provided that their charter was in accordance with the provisions of the law. Most importantly, extensive powers were granted to the Registrar of Trade Unions, who was appointed by the Governor. He had the right to refuse the registration of any union without justification; to demand alterations of trade union charters and the replacement of unions' officials; and to exclude workers from membership in a union.⁷⁵ The law stipulated no specific rights for the unions, and did not preclude the involvement of employers. In the same period, the government created the post of Inspector of Mines and Labour to supervise labour activities and the implementation of the new legislation.⁷⁶

This exceedingly restrictive regulatory framework that reflected 'deliberate government policy' along with practical and bureaucratic difficulties impeded trade union registration.⁷⁷ In mid-1938, the Registrar reported to the Colonial Secretary:

[T]here has been a good deal of discouragement [for registration]... If it has not been possible to find fault with the character and antecedents of the organizers, then the rules have been searched for grounds on which the application could be refused. Some applicants have submitted the rules of a trade union already registered, but nevertheless they find that their rules are criticized and amendments demanded. Two applicants submitted identical rules simultaneously... [O]ne set was considered to meet statutory requirements, the

⁷⁴ CSA, SA1/1368/1930/3, Acting Governor to the Secretary of State, 1941.

⁷⁵ The trade unions applying for registration were required to submit a list with their members, which was crosschecked against the police's registry of communists. NA, FCO 141/2532, *Formation of Trades Unions*, Chief Commandant of Police to the Colonial Secretary, 26 February 1936.

⁷⁶ NA, CO 67/248/19, *Post of Inspector of Mines*, December 1932.

⁷⁷ The registration procedure was overly costly. The law required of the unions to submit ten shillings for registration fees, one shilling for examination of the documents and one additional shilling for any alteration of the charter. Furthermore, the registration criteria required many documents and special legal and language knowledge.

other was not... [S]ome trade unions are still unregistered although their applications were made two years ago.⁷⁸

In this context, only five trade unions had been registered by 1937. The delays attracted severe criticism from trade union leaders, but also by part of the press that expressed the views of the Greek-Cypriot elite. Government policy would become more tolerant after 1938, and especially after the end of Governor Palmer's term. In total, 62 trade unions had been registered by 1941.⁷⁹

Under these circumstances, organized labour was dealt a serious blow during the first years after the 1931 revolt. The proscription of the existing trade unions and labour organizations, and measures such as the imprisonment of leading trade unionists, the banning of labour newspapers and police supervision, neutralized the movement.⁸⁰ The sparse and unorganized protests that followed were quickly suppressed, without achieving the workers' demands. The most important event of the period was the Nicosia builders' strike in 1933, which involved 800 workers, who demanded the reduction of work hours and an increase in their daily wages. The strike was quickly terminated after its suppression and the imprisonment of 20 of the participants.⁸¹ During the second half of the decade, however, the KKK was gradually reorganized under the leadership of Ploutis Servas. Labour mobilizations became much better organized and more effective.⁸² By the end of the decade, the labour movement had again grown significantly. Its membership included both men and women, Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots, and it had cultivated solidarity among workers from different unions and workplaces.

In late 1935, the shoemakers' union in Nicosia – the first that had been registered under the 1932 Law – mobilized its members (Greek-Cypriots, Turkish-Cypriots and Armenians). The

⁷⁸ CSA, SA1/1368/30/2, *Trade Union Legislation in the Colonies*, Registrar of Trade Unions to the Colonial Secretary, 21 June 1938.

⁷⁹ CSA, SA1/1100/1939, *Registered Trade Unions in Cyprus*, 8 August 1941.

⁸⁰ All trade unions and Labour Centres were proscribed after the October revolt, as well as the organization *Cyprus Workers' Support*. *The Cyprus Gazette*, 1933 pp. 534 and 685. For a list of the trade unionists imprisoned until 1933 see *History of the PSE-PEO*, 1991, pp. 36-38.

⁸¹ *History of the PSE-PEO*, 1991, p. 49.

⁸² Servas had participated in the First Congress of the KKK in 1926 as one of the delegates from the Communist Youth; he soon became a leading figure of the party. In 1927, he was elected at its Central Committee, and, two years later, he went to Moscow to study the social sciences. After the October revolt, he was deported from the island, and in 1934 he went to Greece, where he was actively involved in the underground activities of the Communist Party of Greece. In September 1935, the Greek government deported him back to Cyprus, and he was only allowed to return after signing a declaration stating that he would refrain from communist and political activities. Nonetheless, Servas attempted successfully to reorganize the KKK. ASKI, F-20/21/18, *Criticism and Self-criticism of the members of the Central Committee of AKEL*, 'Ploutis Servas'; Heinz Richter, 'The Cypriot Communist Party and the Comintern', *The Cyprus Review*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (2003), 10.

union began campaigning for its recognition by employers, the establishment of the eight-hour workday, and the increase of wages.⁸³ After six months of demonstrations, public assemblies, the signing of petitions and strike, the employers agreed to part of the demands and established a cooperative shoe factory in which the workers could participate as shareholders.

Among the most significant events of the period was the miners' strike in 1936. Although the workers ended the strike without fulfilling their demands, the action attracted great interest from the press, creating a broad public debate. The American-owned Cyprus Mines Corporation (CMC) was the island's largest private employer, with a daily average labour force of more than 3000 miners. Temporary employment in the mines contributed significantly to the control of unemployment.⁸⁴ After 1933, a significant drop in wages, coupled with an inflation in the prices of staples, caused a serious exacerbation of the miners' already precarious position. In August 1936, workers in the two main sites operated by the CMC, Skouriotissa and Mavrovouni, both in Nicosia district, convened assemblies and formed committees to present a list with demands to the management of the company. Their demands ranged from an increase in their salaries to the establishment of an insurance fund for the compensation of injured workers. After the company rejected the demands, the miners went on a large-scale strike and organized protests.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, these were quickly repressed by the police; nine strikers, including the strike committee members, were charged with organizing a public meeting and were sentenced to a £10 guarantee, payable within a year.⁸⁶

Two years after the miners' strike, in June 1938, female workers at the cotton factory in Famagusta went on strike. The action, whose demands ranged from a salary increase to the improvement of work conditions and notice before dismissal, lasted a month and a half.⁸⁷ During the strike, the factory continued operation by employing male strike-breakers. The strike, however, characterized by the participants as 'the first militant manifestation of the women of Cyprus', immediately received the solidarity of the trade unions. A few days after the beginning of the strike, the unions of builders, barbers, tailor workers, carpenters, shoemakers, shop tenants

⁸³ *History of the PSE-PEO*, 1991, p.40.

⁸⁴ NA, FCO 141/2573, memorandum by the Inspector of Mines and Labour, 7 February 1938.

⁸⁵ *Eleftheria*, 'Yesterday's Mavrovouni miners' strike', 1 September 1936.

⁸⁶ *Eleftheria*, 'Yesterday's judgment of the miners' committee', 11 September 1936.

⁸⁷ The factory was owned and run by Panayiotis Ioannou, a wealthy Greek-Cypriot merchant and landowner who had been member of the Famagusta municipal council before the 1931 revolt. CSA, SA1/832/38, Famagusta Commissioner's report to the Colonial Secretary, 7 June 1938.

and blacksmiths sent a joint communiqué to the District Commissioner, asking for his intervention on behalf of the workers, and declaring their support of the struggle.⁸⁸ After six weeks of conflict between strikers and strike-breakers, 13 strikers were arrested, four of whom were imprisoned and seven fined; all of them were dismissed from employment.

Despite the constant cooperation between employers and the government, some of the mobilizations of the period led to victory for the workers. The first successful strike was the Famagusta builders' strike in 1937, which achieved recognition of the trade union by the contractors, salary increases and the establishment of an eight-hour workday during winter. Another such example was the Limassol builders' strike in 1938, which also achieved salary increases and the reduction of working hours.⁸⁹ Most significantly, the Nicosia builders' strike in 1939 led to the signing of the first collective agreement, and constituted a turning point for the Cypriot labour movement. In April 1939, an assembly of the Nicosia builders and builders' employees trade union submitted a set of demands to the contractors, ranging from the increase of wages to the recognition of the trade union. After most contractors refused to meet the demands, a large number of workers went on a four-day strike. The action resulted in the signing of a collective agreement, which incorporated the majority of the workers' demands, including the employers' obligation to employ only members of the trade union. In the following weeks, the Nicosia carpenters also secured collective agreements.

Until the end of the 1930s, both trade unions and non-union workers constantly pushed for the introduction of protective labour legislation and the protection of labour rights, including the freedom of organization.⁹⁰ In parallel, attempts towards the consolidation of trade unions, initially on the district and later on pan-Cypriot level, indicated the organizational advances of trade unionism, which would be made vividly manifest at the end of the decade.⁹¹ The existing legal framework did not provide for amalgamation of trade unions, but it did not preclude it either. The government responded to this trend with great reservation, fearing that amalgamation would further encourage workers' membership in unions. In a period of growing communist

⁸⁸ *Proceedings of the Second Pan-Cypriot Trade Union Conference*, p. 4, speech by Foti Kleitou, participant in the strike, at the Conference; *History of the PSE-PEO*, 1991, p. 54.

⁸⁹ *History of the PSE-PEO*, 1991, pp. 53-54.

⁹⁰ See CSA, SA1/640/1934/2, *Labour Legislation in Cyprus*, petitions by Skouriotissa miners and workers of Larnaca and Famagusta to Governor Palmer, May and June 1939.

⁹¹ CSA, SA1/1039/31, Colonial Secretary to the Registrar of Trade Unions, 4 August 1939; report by the Registrar of Trade Unions to the Colonial Secretary on applications for amalgamation, 30 January 1940.

influence within the trade unions, this would make exercising control over the labour movement much more difficult.⁹² As the obstruction of amalgamation was not legally possible, however, and as it would further result in the decrease of the unions' leading positions, the government only ensured that the new unions operated under a strict regulating regime.

In early 1939, many trade unions requested permission to convene a conference that would lay the foundation for all of the unions in Cyprus and the formation of an island-wide federation. By rejecting the request, Governor Palmer caused a strong reaction among unions and criticism by part of the Greek-Cypriot press. Pressure led Palmer's successor, William Battershill, to grant permission eventually. The Conference was convened on 6 August in Famagusta and was attended by 101 representatives of the 44 trade unions that were officially registered on the island, as well as some additional unions that had not yet completed the process of registration. The unions had a total membership of 2500 workers, most of them Greek-Cypriots.⁹³ The main issues discussed were the coordination of the unions and the demands for which the labour movement should campaign. The demands were codified in a 16-article resolution, which was to be submitted to the government. The action was cancelled, however, because of disagreements between communist and right-wing representatives, who considered that this would enhance the Left's already great control over trade unionism.⁹⁴ Furthermore, similar disputes made the election of a central union leadership at the conference impossible, indicating the organizational limits of trade unionism. Despite these failures, the realization of the Conference constituted the first systematic attempt towards the consolidation of trade unionism across the island. A second more organized attempt would occur in the early 1940s, when a second conference would convene, signalling the beginning of a period of more effective organization of the labour movement.

⁹² From 1936 onwards, Police and District Commissioners reported that communist influence in the trade unions and labour actions was increasing. The government insisted, however, that no serious communist threat existed any more in the colony. This situation changed upon reports that Cypriot communists who had been residing in London were travelling to Spain to participate in the civil war. During the period 1936-1939, around 60 Cypriots fought on the republican side. NA, CO 67/265/11, *Political situation: monthly police intelligence reports*, 1936-1939; NA, FCO 141/2606, Commissioner of Police's reports for December 1939 and January 1940; Giorgos Georgis, 'Η συμμετοχή των Κυπρίων Αριστερών στον Ισπανικό Εμφύλιο [The participation of Cypriot leftists in the Spanish Civil War]', in Georgis and Katsourides, 2013, pp. 153-166.

⁹³ *Anexartitos*, 'the decisions of the Pan-Cypriot Labour Conference', 8 August 1939; *Proceedings of the Second Pan-Cypriot Trade Union Conference*, p. 33.

⁹⁴ See *History of the PSE-PEO*, 1991, pp. 53-54; Grigoris Grigoriades, *Ιστορία της ΣΕΚ [History of the SEK]*, vol. A (Nicosia: 1994), p. 119.

4.3 Foundation of AKEL and the Institutionalization of Trade Unionism

On the eve of the Second World War, the need for the British to secure the cooperation of colonial populations led to the introduction of a series of reforms in colonial governance. In the case of Cyprus, the replacement of Governor Palmer by the more moderate Battershill in July 1939 facilitated a departure from the authoritarian regime of the 1930s. At the same time, the outbreak of the war brought about intense economic dislocation to the island, adversely affecting employment figures and the cost of living. During the war, many sectors of the economy that employed a large proportion of the population, especially the commercial, mining and construction centres, under-performed or even ceased functioning. The case of the islands' mines is indicative. The CMC ceased operations at its two main sites, due to the closure of the German market, laying off more than 3000 miners in 1940.⁹⁵ At the same time, the constant rise of the inflation rate caused a great increase in prices of primary products.⁹⁶

Attempting to reduce unemployment, the government initiated a series of small-scale public relief projects in villages and towns. With the exception of the period from July to November 1941, however, levels of employment remained very low.⁹⁷ The government sought to address the rising inflation through administrative measures by centrally determining the price of staple products and by attempting to decrease the production and wage costs.⁹⁸ The ineffectiveness of the measures drew strong protest from the trade unions and workers, who demanded further intervention by the government as well as the enactment of protective labour legislation.

During February and March 1940, strikes occurred for the first time in a number of government departments. The most notable, the strike in the Public Works Department, caused unrest in all major towns. All demonstrations were harshly dispersed by the police and many workers were arrested. In telegrams of protest sent to the Governor as well as to British politicians, the trade unions denounced the police violence.⁹⁹ At the end of the year, trade union

⁹⁵ CSA, SA1/1196/36, *Cyprus Mines Corporation*, resident director to the Colonial Secretary, 8 May 1945.

⁹⁶ See NA, CO 67/329/9, *Labour Conditions in Cyprus during the War*, reports by government officials, 1943-1945.

⁹⁷ After the battle of Crete in May 1941, thousands of workers were employed in defence works; 6,000 were employed in July, 10,000 in September and 25,000 in November.

⁹⁸ CSA, SA1/840/41, Labour Adviser's report, 20 October 1941; CSA, SA1/691/1942, *Control of Leather industry*, report to the Colonial Secretary, 20 May 1943.

⁹⁹ Yiangou, 2012, p. 36.

representatives submitted a series of suggestions concerning the drop of prices, which were rejected by the government.¹⁰⁰ Until mid-1941, male and female unemployed workers organized large protests outside administration and government offices in the major towns, demanding employment and the opening of relief works. The protests were followed by arrests and prosecutions.¹⁰¹ At the same time, successful strikes that involved both Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots, such as those of the builders working on the Nicosia Military Hospital, the Nicosia shoe-labourers, the Limni (Paphos) miners and the Famagusta railway workers, illustrated the dynamics of the labour movement during the first years of the war.¹⁰²

Meanwhile, since the beginning of the war, Britain began to change its overall labour policy in the colonies, with a view to stemming growing labour mobilization and social turmoil. In this context, the 1940 Colonial Development and Welfare Act provided that colonies could under certain conditions be eligible for grants for the establishment of trade unions.¹⁰³ In Cyprus' case, labour conditions and the lack of relevant legislation on the island attracted the criticism of part of the British press, Labour MPs and numerous district organizations of the Labour Party. Under pressure from the Cypriot labour movement, the government was forced to revise its labour policy.¹⁰⁴

The new direction was determined mainly by four labour laws enacted in 1941 and 1942. Before introducing the laws, the government had asked the trade unions to express their position, but eventually chose not to take it under consideration.¹⁰⁵ The main rationale of the reforms was that the extremely restrictive framework of the 1932 Labour Law often forced trade unions to act outside it. In early 1941, the Colonial Secretary stated:

If we try to restrict development [of trade unions] to statutory objects, we get either an abortion or an explosion. We shall perpetuate the atmosphere of illegality which surrounds Cyprus trade unions under the present law because if

¹⁰⁰ *Anexartitos*, 'Suggestions for the positive address of the working classes', 20 October 1940; 'The Government's reply to the trade unions', 24 October 1940.

¹⁰¹ *Anexartitos*, 'Yesterday's trial of Nicosia's unemployed persons', 18 April 1940.

¹⁰² The mine of Limni was operated by the American Cyprus Sulphur and Copper Company.

¹⁰³ See Marjorie Nicholson, *The TUC overseas; the roots of policy* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986), pp. 206-209.

¹⁰⁴ See *Manchester Guardian*, 'The Cyprus Régime. Trade Union Activities Forbidden', 3 July 1939, article sent to the newspaper by Cypriot trade unionists; CSA, SA1/1000/1940, Secretary of the Southgate Labour Party to the Secretary of State, Malcolm MacDonald, 10 July 1939.

¹⁰⁵ Three laws were enacted in 1941, the Trade Unions and Trade Disputes Law, the Minimum Wage Law and the Trade Disputes (Conciliation, Arbitration and Injury Law); and one in 1942, the Workmen's Compensation (Amendment) Law.

we do not give them freedom to develop they will do the things to which objection is seen by a persistent process of acts outside the law and in defiance of the Government.¹⁰⁶

The same view was expressed by the Acting Governor:

We can proceed no longer under the existing Trade Union Law ..., which [does not give] the Government any real safeguards and control... [W]e shall have in [the proposed] Bill as good an instrument as ... to enable the Government to meet any industrial unrest...¹⁰⁷

The new legislation introduced an institutional framework which was relatively liberal when compared to the existing one and to laws enacted during the same period in other parts of the empire. The law expanded trade union freedoms and met part of the unions' demands on the protection of the working class. It excluded many categories of workers from its provisions, however, and its implementation revealed the government's concern to control the spread of trade unionism on the island.¹⁰⁸ It thus received intense criticism by the unions, mainly because of the provision that excluded unemployed persons from registration, the limitations to the right to strike and the exclusion of domestic servants and land workers from any form of compensation.¹⁰⁹

At the same time, alongside the shift in its labour policy, the government was forced to revise its policy towards communist activities on the island as well. During the first years of the war, reports on the KKK's attempts to extend its appeal beyond labour mobilizations and influence broader strata of the society had alarmed government officials. In April 1940, the Commissioner of Police reported to the Colonial Secretary on a party pamphlet that stated that the Soviet Union had taken control of the balance of power in Europe. The pamphlet also called for the workers' support for the USSR, so that communism could spread to the rest of the world.¹¹⁰ Most alarmingly for the government, the pamphlet stressed that the KKK leadership

¹⁰⁶ CSA, SA1/1368/30/3, Colonial Secretary's memorandum, 21 February 1941.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., Acting Governor to the Secretary of State, early 1941.

¹⁰⁸ Registration of trade unions was often denied, such as in the case of the Limassol municipal workers trade union and the Pan-Cypriot Schoolmasters Association, which were registered only following the justification of their appeals to the Supreme Court in 1944. CSA, SA1/488/1942/1, judgments by the Supreme Court and report by the Registrar of Trade Unions, 29-30 June 1944.

¹⁰⁹ CSA, SA1/1368/30/4, Colonial Secretary's memorandum on his meeting with trade unions' representatives, 11 December 1941; Dimitris Kalantzopoulos, 'Domestic work in Cyprus, 1925-1955: Motivations, Working Conditions and the Colonial Legal Framework', in Dirk Hoerder, Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk, Silke Neunsinger (eds.), *Towards a Global History of Domestic and caregiving workers* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), pp. 451-464.

¹¹⁰ NA, FCO 141/2606, Commissioner of Police to the Colonial Secretary, 19 April 1940.

had begun to re-organize the party, with the aim to be able to overthrow the colonial government at a moment's notice and assume power itself. In May of the same year, the KKK held its Fourth Congress in secret. The Congress decided that the party would form a political organization which would allow the Left to return to a legal existence and which would appeal to a much broader audience.¹¹¹

Despite increasing communist activity, international conditions and internal developments in Britain did not allow the government to maintain its repressive policy against communist activities on the island. After the outbreak of the war, Britain was increasingly reliant on help from the colonies. German encroachment in the Eastern Mediterranean to reach the Middle East oilfields meant the British needed to cultivate good relations with the colonial populations. In the case of Cyprus, which the German propaganda was targeting with radio programmes, the new policy signalled the reintroduction to some degree of representative government, which had been suspended during the previous decade of authoritarian rule.¹¹² Moreover, Britain's alliance with Greece and the Soviet Union favoured a more tolerant treatment of the Greek-Cypriots, which included communists.

In line with the new policy, in early 1941, the Labour Adviser – whose post succeeded that of the Inspector of Mines and Labour – proposed the abolition of the communists' registry. Although the Governor and the Colonial Secretary paid lip service to the idea, the order they gave the Attorney General was altogether different. The Colonial Secretary advised him to 'put this file away: it should be seen by no one other than yourself and ... must not be referred outside the CSO [Colonial Secretary's Office] without my authority'.¹¹³ Later in the year, when a number of communists unsuccessfully asked for permission to travel to the Soviet Union and join the Red Army, their full particulars were requested.¹¹⁴

Most importantly, in April 1941, the government gave permission to the liberal politician George Vassiliades, who had been formerly appointed to the Advisory Council, to organize a political meeting at Skarinou, in Larnaca. On 14 April, Vassiliades and other liberal politicians

¹¹¹ The first request to the government to allow the reformation of the Communist Party was made in 1939. Ibid., report 'Brief History of Communism in Cyprus', 28 February 1941.

¹¹² Panayiotou, 1999, p. 337.

¹¹³ NA, FCO 141/2606, Colonial Secretary to the Attorney General, 22 March 1941.

¹¹⁴ NA, FCO 141/2348, Nicosia Commissioner to the Colonial Secretary, 28 February 1945.

met with the KKK leadership and cadres from across the island. The meeting led to the foundation of AKEL.¹¹⁵ The meeting was chaired by Pheidias Kyriakides, a lawyer and industrialist, and speeches were delivered by Servas and Vassiliades, who represented the communists and the liberal wing of the party, respectively. As indicated by the composition of the meeting, the new party was aimed at appealing to both the labour and the middle class, and aspired to form a political space broader than that of the KKK.¹¹⁶ The participants at the meeting discussed and approved the charter of AKEL, and elected a Pan-Cypriot Organizational Committee as well as four local Organizational Committees for the towns of Nicosia, Limassol, Famagusta and Larnaca.

A few months later, on 5 October 1941, AKEL held its first Congress, attended by 90 representatives of the 1,284 members of AKEL, as well as about 100 non-party persons.¹¹⁷ The congress elected Ploutis Servas as General Secretary, thus putting him in charge of both the KKK and AKEL. It also elected a Central Committee for the party, consisting of 17 members, the majority of whom were communists, and also approved the programme of the party, which analysed and codified the demands which AKEL would put forward.

In particular, the programme called for the abolition of the entire authoritarian legislative framework that had been introduced in the aftermath of the 1931 revolt. The programme specifically called for the establishment of civic rights: freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and freedom of association.¹¹⁸ It further suggested the establishment of representative municipal and peasant councils, the introduction of responsible government on the island, and the founding of a Parliament elected with universal voting, its composition proportional to the population of the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot communities. Moreover, it called for the enactment of extensive protective labour legislation and the introduction of

¹¹⁵ NA, FCO 141/2736, *formation of Cyprus Workers' Reform Party*, Postal Censor's report, 14 April 1941; *Anexartitos*, 'Yesterday's meeting for the foundation of a political party of principles', 15 April 1941.

¹¹⁶ It appears that 24 of the 36 participants in the meeting were members of the KKK, while in terms of profession the breakdown was the following: nine were workers; four were artisans or shopkeepers; one was involved with agriculture; seven were lawyers; five were journalists; four were doctors or pharmacists; two were teachers; and four were involved with trade. Strikingly, Turkish-Cypriots were not represented at the meeting. NA, FCO 141/2736, Commissioner of Police to the Colonial Secretary, 30 April 1941; *Anexartitos*, *ibid.*; Panayiotou, 1999, pp. 342-343; Adams, 1971, p. 23.

¹¹⁷ NA, CO 67/314/14, *Reports on the Working People's Reform Party*, Commissioner of Police to the Colonial Secretary, 9 October 1941; *Anexartitos*, 'Report of the Central Committee of AKEL', 6 December 1941.

¹¹⁸ See *Πρόγραμμα και Καταστατικό του Ανορθωτικού Κόμματος Εργαζόμενου Λαού* [*Programme and constitution of the Progressive Party of Working People*] (Limassol: 1941).

measures for the protection of the peasantry. Furthermore, the programme suggested the establishment of universal compulsory education for children up to the age of 14, and a series of reforms on government economic policy, most importantly on the taxation regulatory framework. Notably, the programme asked for ‘recognition of the national status’ of the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot communities, for education based on national traditions and consciousness, and for the lifting of the restrictions on the archiepiscopal election. Most demands stipulated in the programme were repeated in a proclamation addressed to the Cypriot people by the Congress. In its first public statement, AKEL called on all political forces to unite on the side of the Allies against fascism and for the financial support of Greeks and other peoples under attack.¹¹⁹

The Congress thus suggested a number of reforms for the democratization of the administration and the improvement of the living conditions of the population, especially the lower strata. Moreover, AKEL’s programme revealed its new policy towards the Church and its new position on the national question. In contrast with the party’s newspaper *Anexartitos*, the programme did not specifically call for enosis, as this could cause the proscription of the party. After all, many KKK cadres were still opposed to the idea and favoured an opening up of the new party to the Turkish-Cypriot community. The reference to a national status and conscience of the Greek-Cypriot community, however, constituted a major departure from the KKK’s position.¹²⁰ In the following months, the party would call more openly for enosis in its addresses to the colonial authorities, while the demand was directly promoted in public speeches and the left-wing press.

An important factor for this change in the party line, as well as for the opening up to non-communist allies, was undoubtedly the new policy of the Communist International, as decided at its Seventh Congress in 1935. The KKK had been a member of the Comintern since 1931, and the organization’s strategy was then inviting communist parties to seek and form popular fronts with all forces that opposed fascism, regardless of their class identity.¹²¹ The Comintern

¹¹⁹ *Anexartitos*, ‘The First Congress of the Progressive Party to the Cypriot People’, 8 October 1941.

¹²⁰ ASKI, F-20/21/14, ‘A brief report on the Cypriot situation and AKEL’, by Fifis Ioannou, General Secretary of AKEL, late 1940s.

¹²¹ Degras (ed.), *The Communist International 1919-1943, Documents*, Vol. III (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 150.

Congress had further decided that in colonies and semi-colonies, communist parties should first participate in the national-liberation struggle for a proletarian revolution.¹²²

Nevertheless, the national question was a point of disagreement within the party, reflecting debates that had started within the illegal KKK and were now brought over to the new party. The initial question revolved around the composition of AKEL's leadership. One group contended that this should consist mainly of communists, who would secure the organizational, political and ideological purity of the new party. Others warned that the new party, in order to become a truly mass party, should court the active participation of non-communists and open up to the dominant discourse of nationalism. As indicated by the composition of the first Central Committee of AKEL, the former group eventually prevailed. From the very first steps of the party, however, the ideological shift on the national question was clearly visible. Together with its desire to represent the Cypriot working class and the lower strata as a whole, the new party also attempted to emerge as the leading political force of the Greek-Cypriot national-liberation struggle. Despite its attempts to include Turkish-Cypriots in the party procedures, and its constant assurances that a potential union with Greece would benefit Turkish-Cypriots as well, their participation in the party remained limited, in contrast with the bi-communal character of the labour movement.¹²³

Soon after its foundation, AKEL was involved in the establishment of a number of affiliated organizations, such as women's and educational associations. The trade unions, however, remained its main source of support and the primary target for its recruiting efforts.¹²⁴ A month after the party's first Congress, the Second Pan-Cypriot Trade Union Conference was held in Nicosia on 16 November 1941. The conference was attended by 194 delegates representing the 7500 workers that were organized in 66 trade unions across the island. The conference proceedings were preoccupied with labour and organizational issues and the anti-fascist struggle. The conference also self-critically discussed the low participation of women and

¹²² Seventh World Congress Communist International, *Full Text of the Resolutions Adopted at the Seventh Congress* (Twopence, 1935).

¹²³ See indicatively *Anexartitos*, 'The Progressive party for the national restoration of Cyprus under the roof of the motherland', 20 November 1941.

¹²⁴ See Christos Petas, *Το κίνημα των μορφωτικών συλλόγων [The movement of the educational associations 1939-1945]* (Nicosia, 1992).

Turkish-Cypriots in the trade unions.¹²⁵ Although membership numbers are not broken down according to communal affiliation, there is evidence that the participation of Turkish-Cypriots in the labour movement was much higher than in trade unions, compared to the respective rate among Greek-Cypriots. Most importantly, the Conference decided to introduce the organization of the unions according to a federal model. The Παγκύπρια Συντεχνιακή Επιτροπή [Pan-Cypriot Trade Union Committee – PSE] was founded to serve as a central body for all Cypriot unions. Its foundation allowed the effective cooperation between the island's trade unions, and the PSE would henceforth play a crucial role in the organization of the labour movement. Furthermore, the foundation of the PSE led to the establishment of connections between the labour movement in Cyprus and labour organizations abroad. Over the objections of the colonial authorities, the PSE members represented the Cypriot unions at the World Trade Union Conferences held in London and Paris in 1945 and other international events.¹²⁶

The founding of the PSE not only reflected the organizational progress of trade unionism in Cyprus, but also signalled its institutionalization, both in terms of its internal operational structure and in its correlation to the state. According to the charter of the PSE, all district trade union committees had to follow the decisions of the body. Furthermore, the PSE organized campaigns against gambling and alcohol abuse and prohibited both in trade union premises, while it occasionally imposed sanctions on trade union members who did not comply with respective instructions. It also set up libraries and formed educational and theatrical associations, administered by workers.¹²⁷ At the same time, the federation's role was to be formally recognized by the government, as indicated by its participation in the committee set up by the government in late 1942 to suggest measures for the decrease in the cost of living. In 1947, the successor organization to the PSE would again be invited to participate in the Consultative Assembly. In other words, the PSE functioned as an institution on two levels: on one hand, it acted as a central guiding body to trade unionism on the island, and applied a set of social rules that regulated its members' behaviour; on the other, it was recognized both by the public and the colonial government as the institution that represented the Cypriot working class.

¹²⁵ *Proceedings of the Second Pan-Cypriot Trade Union Conference*, p. 33.

¹²⁶ NA, CO 67/323/4, *Political situation reports*, report for December 1945.

¹²⁷ *Proceedings of the Second Pan-Cypriot Trade Union Conference*, pp. 30-32 and 65.

4.4 Intra-communal and Inter-communal Divisions: The Impact on Labour Politics

In the years after the foundation of AKEL, during the period when the party operated in parallel with the KKK, another dispute emerged besides the disagreement on the national question. The question was whether both parties should continue their parallel course, with the underground KKK guiding AKEL, or whether the former should dissolve. The dispute culminated in 1943 and 1944, and was finally resolved in 1945, with the dissolution of the KKK and its incorporation into AKEL. The majority opinion among KKK cadres contended that AKEL could not be considered as a communist party but rather as a broad petit-bourgeois organization that therefore needed the KKK's guidance. Conversely, a minority of the KKK's leadership that included Servas considered AKEL a proletarian party, which shared the same programme with the KKK, and argued that any weaknesses in line would be gradually surpassed.¹²⁸

On a second level, the growing appeal of AKEL among the population meant that the debate would complicate election strategies and alliances.¹²⁹ In March 1943, Servas was elected mayor of Limassol while still serving as the General Secretary of the KKK and AKEL. Following his election, he refused to comply with the decision of AKEL that he move to Nicosia, where the party's headquarters were. The issue was eventually resolved in July 1945, when the Central Committee of AKEL stripped him of his position as General Secretary and expelled him from the party. The Central Committee accused Servas of repeatedly ignoring party decisions and of having formed a faction in opposition to the party majority.¹³⁰ The decision was put to a vote at the fourth Congress of AKEL a month later and it was approved by the delegates. The Congress allowed Servas to return to the party, but it denied him the right to be candidate for any important party position.¹³¹ Fifis Ioannou was elected to the position of the General Secretary.

¹²⁸ ASKI, F-20/21/14, 'A brief report'.

¹²⁹ The party membership was also growing rapidly. The 220 members of the KKK and AKEL in 1941 rose to 3,224 in May 1942 and to 5,000 by 1945. NA, FCO 141/2606, Commissioner of Police's report on communism, 2 February 1942; ASKI, F-20/21/14, 'A brief report'; Katsourides, 2014, p. 186.

¹³⁰ ASKI, F-20/21/40, AKEL's report, 'The course of the Cypriot movement', 6 August 1951; *Anexartitos*, 'On the question of the removal of Ploutis Servas from AKEL, Communiqué of the Central Committee', 3 August 1945.

¹³¹ *Anexartitos*, 'The proceedings of the Fourth Congress of AKEL are finished' 21 August 1945. The decision for Servas' return to AKEL was taken due to the great personal influence he had acquired in Limassol during his term as mayor. His personal network was also the reason for the decision of his party opponents to demand his relocation to Nicosia, as well as for his own refusal. Although Servas' relations with the party worsened in the following period, AKEL was forced to support him at the May 1946 municipal elections as well, and secure his re-election as mayor. Clientelist politics and local rivalries remained a standard feature of Cyprus' political and social life,

During the same period, the debate on the parallel operation of two parties peaked in intensity, before the line in favour of dissolving the KKK prevailed. In August 1944, 16 members of the Central Committee of the KKK resigned and elected a five-member caretaker committee, which organized the fifth Congress of the party. The introductory text of the committee questioned AKEL's credentials as the vanguard of the working class, because of the active participation of opportunistic and petit-bourgeois elements in the party - a development for which the caretaker committee held Servas responsible.¹³² The report of the committee was also very self-critical with regards to past policies of the KKK. Most importantly, it considered the position for an independent socialist Cyprus as a mistake. It had constituted treachery to the Cypriot people, denied its right to self-determination and justified Britain's imperialist exploitation of the island. The report, in line with AKEL's official position, stated that the KKK should have adopted the slogan of enosis, and have led the people's struggle for self-determination. Three months later, the Fifth and final Congress of the KKK decided its amalgamation with AKEL.

Despite the dynamic promotion of enosis by AKEL, which sealed the increasing homogenization of Greek-Cypriot politics on the national question, the political confrontation within the Greek-Cypriot community between the Left and the Right was constantly growing. The growing appeal of the Left and the affiliation between the PSE and AKEL – manifest in the PSE's participation in the party's election campaign in 1943 – alarmed the Greek-Cypriot nationalist elite. The foundation of the Cypriot National Party (KEK), immediately after the elections, was followed by the formation of trade unions independent of the PSE. The Νέες Συντεχνίες [New Trade Unions], supported by the Greek-Cypriot elite and many employers, acquired a clearly nationalist and anti-communist character.¹³³ In October 1944, the 20 New Trade Unions amalgamated into the Συνομοσπονδία Εργατών Κύπρου [Cyprus Workers' Confederation – SEK], while in the same period the Third Pan-Cypriot Trade Union Conference formally placed the PSE under the guidance of AKEL.¹³⁴ Although the levels of participation in

applying equally to both the Greek- and the Turkish-Cypriot communities. In the Greek-Cypriot community's case, this was predominantly demonstrated at the long-lasting rivalry between local Orthodox Bishoprics and was manifested in trade unionism as well, causing occasional criticism by trade unionists.

¹³² Katsourides, 2014, p. 190.

¹³³ See newspapers *I foni ton Neon Sintechinion* [The New Trade Unions' voice] and *Ergatiki Foni* [Labour Voice], published by the New Trade Unions and the SEK.

¹³⁴ *Proceedings of the Third Pan-Cypriot Trade Union Conference*, 24-25 September 1944, p. 80.

the new body remained low until 1949, as shown in the following table, its appearance constituted the beginning of a schism within the labour movement, reflecting the growing polarization within Greek-Cypriot politics.

Table 4. Membership in the PSE/PEO¹³⁵ and the New Trade Unions/SEK, 1944-1950¹³⁶

Year	PSE/PEO	New Trade Unions/SEK
1944	10619	735
1945 ¹³⁷	12961	1032
1946	11101	991
1947	11259	1145
1948	9604	2641
1949	9447	3599
1950	10581	2625

The schism would be consolidated in the 1950s, but was already evident in the second half of the 1940s, most notably during two major events of Cyprus' political history. Following the policy of the Greek-Cypriot elite, the SEK would take a neutral, if not favourable, position on government action against the PSE in 1945-1946, while both bodies would follow party lines on the convocation of the Consultative Assembly in 1947-1948. Their support of different means of struggle, the mutual accusations and the encouragement and recruitment of strike breakers from the SEK would cause frequent tensions between the federations.¹³⁸ The growing polarization of Greek-Cypriot politics, which echoed the civil confrontation in Greece, culminated during the

¹³⁵ The PEO was the Federation which succeeded the PSE in 1946. See next section.

¹³⁶ Sources: Proceedings of the Third, Fourth and Seventh Pan-Cypriot Trade Union Conferences, held in 1944, 1946 and 1952 respectively, which contain data taken from the Trade Union Registry; NA, FCO 141/2819, *KEK*, government report on the party and the organizations affiliated to it, 22 June 1949.

¹³⁷ In 1945-46, the eight trade unions that were not affiliated with either federation were formed. They had around 650 members in total, reaching about 800 in 1947 and falling to around 700 in 1948.

¹³⁸ *Eleftheria*, 'The work continues in Asbestos', 4 August 1948.

second half of the decade. The period after 1947 was marked by the participation of AKEL and the Pan-Cypriot Labour Federation (PEO) in the Consultative Assembly, as well as the election of Makarios II as Archbishop. In 1948, a year of extensive labour unrest on the island, there were numerous confrontations between the PEO and the SEK members, with the latter opposing the strikes and protests organized by the Left. By the end of the decade Cypriot trade unionism would be fully incorporated into the cold-war context. In late 1949, following the split within the World Federation of Trade Unions, the SEK joined the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, while the PEO remained under WFTU.¹³⁹

In the same period, the strengthening of the calls for enosis from all Greek-Cypriot political forces, and the prevalence of the nationalist modernist Turkish-Cypriot leadership in the municipal elections set the context for a second secession from the PSE. As discussed in Chapter 3, a few weeks after the elections, the traditionalist Turkish-Cypriot elite and the modernist leadership proceeded to establish the Association of the Turkish Minority of the Island of Cyprus (KATAK). In May 1943, the new party encouraged the formation of separate Turkish-Cypriot trade unions, federated under the Lefkosa Türk Amele Birliği [Nicosia Turkish Workers Union – LTAB].¹⁴⁰ Soon after its formation, and in line with the KATAK's policy, the LTAB complained to the Labour Adviser about the difficulties that Turkish-Cypriots faced in finding work, due to the fact that the majority of public works supervisors were Greek-Cypriots. The LTAB proposed a set of regulations to be adopted by the government to secure their equal employment with Greek-Cypriots. The proposals were rejected, and the Labour Adviser assured the petitioners that Turkish-Cypriot applications for work in government departments were treated equally to those of Greek-Cypriots. The Adviser urged the LTAB leadership to cooperate with the bigger trade unions affiliated to the PSE on labour issues so as to maximize the possibilities of achieving their demands.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Grigoriades, 1994, p. 351.

¹⁴⁰ The party also encouraged the foundation of the *Turkish Farmers Association*, whose members seceded from the Pan-Cypriot Farmers' Union (PEK), a right-wing association founded in May 1942 by well-off farmers with the support of the Greek-Cypriot elite. Ahmet An, *Kıbrıslı Türklerin Siyasal Tarihi (1930-1960)* [*Turkish-Cypriots' Political History (1930-1960)*] (Nicosia: Özyay, 2006), 137; *Eleftheria*, 'The resolution of the Pan-Cypriot Rural Conference in Athienou', 1 June 1942; *Anexartitos*, 'The rural conference: the real aims of the union', 2 June 1942.

¹⁴¹ CSA, SA1/658/1943/1, LTAB to the Labour Adviser, 8 August 1943; Labour Adviser's reports, 31 January 1944 and 11 September 1945.

A year later, after the modernist Turkish-Cypriot leadership seceded from the KATAK in April 1944 and founded the Turkish Cypriot National Union Party (KTMBP), the new party encouraged the formation of the Turkish Trade Unions, which were soon federated under the Association of Turkish Trade Unions of Cyprus (KTIBK). The Turkish-Cypriot federation initially consisted of seven unions, which absorbed the majority of the LTAB membership.¹⁴² Similarly to the LTAB, the KTIBK and district Turkish-Cypriot unions stressed the oppression of their community by Greek-Cypriots, denounced the inequality in employment opportunities and the promotion of enosis by municipal authorities, and expressed its support for the reforms on communal administration that were being promoted in the same period by the KTMBP.¹⁴³ Following in large part the political line of the KTMBP and mirroring the SEK, the KTIBK developed a nationalist and anti-communist discourse. As in the latter's case, however, the KTIBK was largely unsuccessful in absorbing Turkish-Cypriot workers from the PSE (after 1946 PEO). In 1945, the PSE counted 629 Turkish-Cypriots, compared to 843 registered KTIBK members, while in the following years membership in the KTIBK dropped constantly, as shown in the following table.¹⁴⁴ Nevertheless, in 1945, overall Turkish-Cypriot membership in trade unions was about twice as low as that of Greek-Cypriots in 1945, compared to each community's population.¹⁴⁵ Thus, despite the second secession, the PSE and the labour movement as a whole retained its bi-communal character throughout the period under scrutiny. Turkish-Cypriots continued to be represented in the PSE and the PEO district trade union boards until 1958.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² An, 2006, pp. 145, 155 and 279; NA, FCO 141/2794, *Proposals to establish separate Turkish branches of trades unions*, May – December 1944.

¹⁴³ CSA, SA1/658/1943/2, memoranda to the Colonial Secretary by the General secretaries of the Larnaca and Nicosia and Kyrenia Turkish Trade Unions, 8 May 1946.

¹⁴⁴ *Proceedings of the Fourth Pan-Cypriot Trade Union Conference*, 1946, p. 27.

¹⁴⁵ Calculation based on the 1946 census. John-Jones, 1983, p. 60.

¹⁴⁶ See Pantelis Varnava, *Κοινοί εργατικοί αγώνες Ελληνοκυπρίων και Τουρκοκυπρίων* [*Common labour struggles of Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots*] (Nicosia: 2004), pp. 49-58.

Table 5. Membership in the KTIBK¹⁴⁷

Year	Number of KTIBK members
1944	436
1945	843
1946	681
1947	640
1948	595
1949	160
1950	131

During the same period, the labour movement united in an unprecedentedly large-scale strike, which constituted a critical moment in wartime relations between the government and the Left. The so-called ‘cost of living strike’ lasted from 1 to 23 March 1944 and involved 1800 workers. The strike represented the culmination of the protests of Cypriot workers against the increase of the cost of living. These had started in early December 1942 with a strike of workers at defence works, demanding the readjustment of salaries in proportion with the price index. By the end of the month, the government responded by forming a committee on the cost of living composed of representatives of the government and the PSE as well as prominent figures of the

¹⁴⁷ Sources: Proceedings of the Third, Fourth and Seventh Pan-Cypriot Trade Union Conferences; NA, FCO 141/2819, *KEK*, government report on the party and the organizations affiliated to it, 22 June 1949; *History of the PSE-PEO*, 1991, pp. 250-252. Notably, in 1954 the KTIBK counted 700 members, compared to 1700 Turkish-Cypriots registered in trade unions affiliated to the PEO.

Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot communities.¹⁴⁸ Following the failure of the committee to reach a decision, due to disagreements among its members, protests continued throughout 1943. They culminated on 1 March 1944, with a strike in the Army and Public Works Department in Nicosia, Famagusta and Larnaca. The strike, organized by the PSE, was principally supported by AKEL, but also by the KEK, the SEK, professional associations, leading political figures of the island, such as the Locum Tenens Leontios and Fazıl Küçük, as well as the majority of the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot press.¹⁴⁹

Despite the unanimous support the strikers received, the government declined to address their demands. After 11 days on strike, and following an unsuccessful meeting between the PSE and the Colonial Secretary, the government announced its intention to consider a review of wages in relation to the cost of living.¹⁵⁰ The PSE, however, decided to harden its stance, and called for a one-day general strike. On 13 March, about 4000 employees at the War Department joined the strikers, and were joined by railway employees, as well as most Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot newspapers.¹⁵¹ A week later, the strike entered a new stage when the government decided to fire the strikers and continue work on military schemes with the help of soldiers from the Cyprus Volunteer Force Reserve Company.¹⁵² On the following day, the leadership of the PSE met again with the Colonial Secretary, who assured them of the formation of a new committee, which would debate measures for the decrease of the cost of living, and guaranteed that the strikers would not be dismissed from employment. The PSE eventually terminated the strike and work resumed on 24 March. The action demonstrated the dynamics of the bi-communal labour movement and the pressure it could exert on the government.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁸ *Anexartitos*, 'The defence works strike and the price index', 24 December 1942. For the composition of the Committee, see Pan-Cypriot Labour Federation, *Αγώνες για τον τιμάρθμο 1940-44* [*Struggles for the price index 1940-44*], (Nicosia: PEO publications, 1984), p. 15.

¹⁴⁹ *Anexartitos*, 'Locum Tenens and the struggle of the public works employees', 1 March 1944; *Eleftheria*, 'The strike and the National Party', 6 March 1944; *Neos Kypriakos Phylax*, 'The strike', 8 March 1944.

¹⁵⁰ *Neos Kypriakos Phylax*, 'The Colonial Secretary rejected the strikers' demands', 8 March 1944.

¹⁵¹ *Anexartitos*, 'Yesterday's pan-labour protest strike', 14 March 1944; Yiangou, 2012, p. 119.

¹⁵² NA, CO 67/323/2, political report for March 1944; *Eleftheria*, 'The replacement of strikers started yesterday', 21 March 1944.

¹⁵³ NA, CO 67/327/10, *Labour unrest and establishment of wages commission*, Governor to the Colonial Secretary, 21 March 1944. The strike and its bi-communal character left strong memories with the strikers. One of the participants, Alexandros Petrou, wrote 40 years later: '[At Famagusta square] everybody seeing us, both Greeks and Turks, were applauding us. This was happening every day'. Similarly, Anna Pitsili recalled: 'The solidarity and donations of Greeks and Turks ... were so moving that they will always live in our memory'. *Manuscripts of various leading figures of the struggle of 1st March*, collection of the PEO, mid-1980s, manuscript of Alexandros

In the same period, lower and middle-class Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots participated in the parochial committees of the municipality of Limassol, established in early 1944 on the initiative of the mayor Ploutis Servas.¹⁵⁴ On his election, Servas stated that both the Greek and the Turkish flags would be flown at the Town Hall, while his overall policy had gained the support of the Turkish-Cypriot municipal councillors. This development caused the reaction of the Kemalist press, which called upon the community to isolate AKEL members and sympathizers from within.¹⁵⁵ In the following years, the continuation of joint labour mobilizations led to the signing of the Collaboration Protocol between the PEO and the KTIBK on 8 January 1948. The agreement provided for the formation of district committees composed of Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots, which would coordinate joint activities; both federations pledged to support each other in labour disputes. It also provided for the formation of a pan-Cypriot Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot committee, which would attempt to resolve disputes between trade unions, in the hope of improving relations between the two communities. Furthermore, the protocol invited Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot workers to general assemblies to be held in all towns, and denounced ‘the racial hatred and the racial discrimination from wherever it may come as a weapon in the exploiters’ hands for the disruption of the working class’.¹⁵⁶ The agreement reflected the political experience of the labour movement of the previous two decades, while its very provision for the improvement of the overall inter-communal relations reflected the significance of the bi-communal labour movement as a political force in the island’s socio-political life.

Petrou and transcription of Anna Pitsili’s speech at the Fourth PEO Limassol Conference of female employees on 20 February 1984.

¹⁵⁴ The parochial committee of Arnaoutia was presided over by a Turkish-Cypriot carpenter and consisted of three more members, a tavern owner, a barber and a boatman. The Castro-Ayios Antonios parochial committee was also presided over by a Turkish-Cypriot tailor and consisted of two other members, a convenience store owner and a tailor. Katsiaounis, 2000, pp. 179-180.

¹⁵⁵ *Anexartitos*, ‘The new Municipal authorities took office’, 2 April 1943; NA, CO 67/314/12, *Political situation: monthly reports from the Governor*, report for October 1943.

¹⁵⁶ The agreement is cited in Varnava, 2004, pp. 22-25.

4.5 New Government Policy, Inter-communal Cooperation and Intra-communal Polarization

In the spring of 1945, as the Second World War was coming to its end, the government dramatically changed its previously tolerant attitude towards the Left. Measures resembling the ones that had been implemented during the 1930s were introduced again on the island. These included the restriction of press freedom and proscription of trade unions. The police also began dispersing public meetings again. The first signs of this change of policy appeared in March, on the occasion of the anniversary of the Greek War of Independence.¹⁵⁷

A few days before the 25 March anniversary, the organizers of the celebrations in the village of Lefkoniko had agreed to let a schoolmaster give a speech at the churchyard after the service, on the understanding that the event would have no political character. After the speech, however, an AKEL member attempted to speak at the gathering, triggering the reaction of the right-wing attendees. After a minor dispute and some pushing most of the right-wing attendees left and gathered at a local right-wing club. The rest of the crowd, around 200 AKEL members, marched towards their own offices, following a route which led them across a small bridge opposite the right-wing club.¹⁵⁸ Before a physical confrontation could break out, the police intervened, ordering the crowd to disperse, and opened fire, killing three people and wounding several others.¹⁵⁹

Immediately after the incident, the authorities ordered all newspaper editors to refrain from publishing news on the event until an official enquiry was opened. The government appointed a Commission of Enquiry, which failed to produce a unanimous report, even after conducting daily hearings for more than a month.¹⁶⁰ Although the event gave rise to severe criticism against the government in the House of Commons, the Governor described the incident

¹⁵⁷ Direct action against the KKK and trade union members had occasionally occurred during the war years, often drawing criticism to government by Labour MPs. In mid-1940, a KKK member was sentenced to six months' hard labour and another one to a fine of £10 for possession of communist propaganda. In late 1942, seven trade union members were sentenced to 18 months imprisonment each for causing threatening injury to a strike-breaker. NA, FCO 141/2606, Commissioner of Police's Intelligence reports on Communism, 1/6 and 20 July 1940; *Hansard, House of Common Debates*, 385 (25 November 1942), cc. 742-3W, question by Denis Pritt; *Kypriaka Nea* (Cypriot News), 'News from Cyprus and Activities of the Committee for Cyprus Autonomy', 22 January 1943.

¹⁵⁸ Yiangou, 2012, p. 155.

¹⁵⁹ *Anexartitos*, 'How police shot against the celebrating crowd', 29 March 1945.

¹⁶⁰ NA, CO 67/324/1, *Disorders in Lefkoniko Village*, Commission of Enquiry's report, 19 June 1945.

as isolated, and saw it as further proof that the government should close down all trade union premises. The colonial authorities chose not to release the commission's report to the public.¹⁶¹

Less than two months after the Lefkoniko incident, the government's repressive actions reached a climax. On 11 May 1945, the police raided the offices of AKEL, of its recently founded youth wing Ανορθωτική Οργάνωση Νεολαίας [Progressive Youth Organization – AON], of trade unions and of several educational associations affiliated to the party.¹⁶² Four days later, the colonial authorities announced charges against the leadership of the PSE, having gathered a vast amount of material. In January 1946, after the largest political trial in Cyprus' history, the organization was dissolved and its leadership imprisoned.

The government justified its actions by claiming that the PSE was 'the nucleus of Communism and of Enosis'.¹⁶³ The search had allegedly uncovered illegal documents that included directions for inciting the population of the colony to seditious activities.¹⁶⁴ The PSE itself was considered unlawful, as it was not registered as a trade union under the 1941 Trade Union Law. Following the government action, the court of Assizes tried and convicted 18 leaders of the PSE on a series of charges under the Criminal Code.¹⁶⁵ First came the conduct of propaganda in support for the violent overthrow of the government and the constitution of Cyprus. Second, the incitement of hatred and disaffection among the population against the government, with the purpose of removing British sovereignty over the island. Finally, the promotion of strife and hostility between different groups and classes of the population.¹⁶⁶ After a 34-day trial, the 18 trade union leaders were convicted on 21 January 1946, and given prison sentences of up to 18 months. The PSE was declared illegal and dissolved. A few days later, the

¹⁶¹ In April 1945, the Labour MP and future Secretary of State Arthur Creech Jones questioned government's handling of the situation, especially with regards to the police action and the ban on the press. A few weeks later, Jones had a meeting with AKEL cadres in London, during which the question of enosis was discussed, among other issues. His stance was reluctantly favourable, yet it allowed AKEL to consider him as one of their strong allies in Britain. *Anexartitos*, 'The Cypriot labour delegation in London', 3 May 1945; Yiangou, 2012, p. 156.

¹⁶² *Eleftheria*, 'Police search in AKEL clubs and trade unions', 12 May 1945; NA, FCO 141/2894, *police search of AKEL premises*, Solicitor General to the Attorney General, 25 October 1945; NA, FCO 141/2942, *AON, youth organisation of the AKEL*, Governor Woolley to Secretary of State George Hall, 1 November 1945.

¹⁶³ NA, CO 67/323/5, *Future status of Cyprus and prosecution of trade unionists*, Governor's note, November or December 1945.

¹⁶⁴ NA, CO 67/323/8, *Prosecution of Pan-Cyprian Trades Union Committee*, Under-Secretary of State's note, end of 1945.

¹⁶⁵ *Anexartitos*, 'The PSE's members are led before the court accused for conspiracy', 14 July 1945.

¹⁶⁶ *Eleftheria*, 'The trade unions' trial', 16 January 1946; 'The Nicosia Assize Court's judgment on the trade union leaders' case', 22 January 1946.

convicted trade union leaders applied for appeal from the Assize judgment to the Supreme Court, which was refused.

The trial caused a strong reaction in public opinion, both in Cyprus and abroad. Strikes and demonstrations took place in all towns of the island during and after the trial and fundraising campaigns were organized for the coverage of the judicial costs and the support of the families of the accused.¹⁶⁷ Right-wing organizations, however, warmly welcomed the prosecution of the PSE. Some expressed publicly their relief at the imprisonment of the trade union leaders, while the SEK abstained from all solidarity demonstrations.¹⁶⁸ The same attitude was held by right-wing newspapers, such as *Nea Politiki Epitheorisi* [*New Political Review*] and *Esperini* (*The Evening Standard*). At the same time, AKEL and the transitional central trade union committee that was formed after the arrest of the trade union leaders attempted to attract extensive publicity to the prosecution of the PSE and the trial. They despatched memoranda to the Greek Trade Union Confederation (GSEE), the British Labour Party, the British Trades Union Congress (TUC), the World Federation of Trade Unions and also to the Governor and the Colonial Office.¹⁶⁹ Similar telegrams were sent by the Committee for Cyprus Affairs, which represented the Greek-Cypriot community in London and was controlled by AKEL.¹⁷⁰

The outcome of the trial and the conduct of the government were highly criticized by members of the House of Commons who belonged to the governing Labour Party. A few weeks after the trial the Labour MP Leslie Solley questioned the democratic nature of the trial's conduct and denounced the overall authoritarian labour policy of the Cyprus government.¹⁷¹ In parallel, dozens of protest petitions were sent to the British government and the House of

¹⁶⁷ NA, CO 67/323/4, report on political situation, January 1946; *History of the PSE-PEO*, 1991, p. 99.

¹⁶⁸ As the Governor noted, all organizations opposing the Left were relieved by the prosecution of the PSE, hoping that the government would prosecute all organizations affiliated to AKEL. NA, CO 67/323/4, Governor's report, May 1945; *Efimeris*, 'The voice of the facts – communist cynicism', 14 September 1946.

¹⁶⁹ The World Federation of Trade Unions was also informed about the PSE's prosecution personally by Michalis Montanios, General Secretary of the transitional PSE, who, together with Miltiades Christodoulou, represented the Cypriot trade unions at the First World Trade Union Conference, held in Paris in October 1945. CSA, SA1/876/1945, report on World Trade Union Conference, October 1945.

¹⁷⁰ NA, CO 67/323/5, Committee for Cyprus Affairs to the Secretary of State, Oliver Stanley, 26 June 1945; *Anexartitos*, 'The charges against the PSE', 29 June 1945.

¹⁷¹ *Hansard, House of Commons Debates*, 420 (5 March 1946), cc. 298-306, question by Solley.

Commons by British trade unions and committees, while similar criticism was expressed by part of the international press.¹⁷²

For Cypriot politics, the trial signalled the culmination of the government policy to control collective action and encapsulated the growing cold-war confrontation on the island. Both the colonial authorities and the Greek-Cypriot elite and right-wing organizations regarded the Left as their greatest political opponent. The PSE represented the most militant part of Cypriot society. The large-scale strikes and protests organized by the body represented a militant left-wing socio-political programme in opposition to British rule on the island. The activities of the PSE had alienated the Cypriot working class from the government and challenged the influence of the island's political elites. By the end of 1945, there were 143 registered trade unions with a total membership of about 13,000 workers - the vast majority affiliated with PSE. Moreover, in September 1944, the federation had formally adopted the demand of enosis at its Third Conference, mainly due to its affiliation with AKEL.¹⁷³ In the context of the colonial authorities' policy against communism - which in this period was seen by the government as the equivalent of Greek-Cypriot nationalism - the trial served as a prosecuting mechanism against AKEL. The post-war climate, which was not easily compatible with direct repression, coupled with the lack of sufficient evidence, deterred the government from directly going after the party, although this was often discussed during this period. Conversely, taking recourse to the courts could even temporarily justify the prosecution of an organization that was considered as an AKEL front and demonstrate government decisiveness to restrict communist activities.¹⁷⁴

Pressure from British trade unions and Labour MPs, however, proved effective. In October 1946, ten months after their imprisonment, the government was eventually forced to release the trade union leaders.¹⁷⁵ The release of the PSE's leadership was considered as a great success for the Left, which recognized the significance which the intervention of the Labour Party, in government since July 1945, had on Cyprus government policy. Nevertheless, the

¹⁷² See indicatively NA, CO 67/323/10, *Prosecution of Pan-Cyprian Trades Union Committee*, article in the Palestinian newspaper *The Palestine Post*, 29 March 1946; article in the Italian weekly journal *Otzi*, 23 April 1946; articles in the Russian newspapers *Evening Moscow* and *New Times*, 18 April 1946 and 1 May 1946 respectively. NA, CO 67/323/5, Hemel Hampstead and District Trades' Council to the Foreign Minister, 30 July 1946.

¹⁷³ *Proceedings of the Third Pan-Cypriot Trade Union Conference*, p. 33.

¹⁷⁴ NA, CO 537/2482, *Trades Unions: Formation of a General Council*, Acting Governor to the Secretary of State, 21 February 1946.

¹⁷⁵ NA, FCO 141/4679, *Communist Party activities in Nicosia district*, Colonial Secretary to the Commissioner of Nicosia, 24 July 1948; *Eleftheria*, 'The 18 trade unionists were released', 19 October 1946.

change of government in Britain would not bring about much differentiation in the overall British colonial policy, including the attitude of the authorities towards trade unionism. Besides, 229 out of 393 Labour MPs, many of them ministers, belonged to the Fabian Society, and they exercised a great influence on the labour politics of the government in the colonies. Published in June 1942, the Society's suggestions on trade unions in the colonies were based on the Orientalist discourse of colonial inferiority. They included the view that '[in the colonies] workers remained primitive' and thus trade unionism could not function in a way similar to that in Britain.¹⁷⁶ The overall policy that the new government intended to follow on the island was largely based on the Society's Colonial Bureau, founded in 1940 by the later Secretary of State Arthur Creech Jones (1946-1950). In October 1945, the Bureau issued a short report dealing specifically with Cyprus, Malta and Hong Kong.¹⁷⁷ As in all British colonies, the Labour government policy in Cyprus would essentially be indistinguishable from that of its predecessor.¹⁷⁸

In this context, the Cyprus government's attempts to control the labour movement and restrict the appeal of the Left in general continued throughout the 1940s, especially after the dissolution of the Consultative Assembly in August 1948. Nevertheless, the trade unions adjusted successfully to the new circumstances, as indicated by the dynamics of the labour movement during the second half of the 1940s and Left's victory in the 1946 municipal elections. Shortly after the dissolution of the PSE in March 1946, its former members convened the fourth pan-Cypriot trade union Conference and decided to found a successor organization, the Pan-Cypriot Labour Federation (PEO). The members of the Conference were preoccupied with the question of how to cope under the new conditions, and debated at length the goals of the

¹⁷⁶ See Fabian Colonial Bureau, *Labour in the colonies: some current problems* (London, Gollancz: Fabian Society, 1942), here p. 3. Interestingly, a similar discourse appropriating the colonial Orientalist discourse was employed by part of the local bourgeois press. In a mid-1938 article on the Workmen's Compensation Bill, the newspaper *Phonitis Kyprou* stressed that as the Bill was modelled on legislation in force in West African territories 'inhabited by coloured people', the rates of compensation should be revised and adapted to the 'superior civilization of the Cypriot workmen, who have a different standard of living to that of the negroes'. Besides, a constant component of the enosis discourse was the superiority of the Greek nation and civilization. AKEL did not have to go as far as the Communist Party of South Africa, which in the early 1920s put forward the slogan 'Workers of the world, unite and fight for a white South Africa!'. From the early 1940s onward, however, AKEL began to stress occasionally that no Turkish civilization existed in Cyprus, the Greek one being the unique in the island. CSA, SA1/1037/1938/1, extract from Press Officer's report, July 1938; South African Communist Party, O'Malley archives, Nelson Mandela Foundation.

¹⁷⁷ Fabian Colonial Bureau, *Strategic colonies and their future* (London: Fabian Society, 1945).

¹⁷⁸ Robert Holland, *The pursuit of greatness; Britain and the world role, 1900-1970* (London: Fontana Press, 1991), 206-7.

labour movement.¹⁷⁹ Moreover, the Conference approved the right of trade union members to participate in any political organization apart from fascist parties and decided the PEO's organizational independence from AKEL. Finally, it declared the PEO's commitment to the struggle for self-determination and enosis, despite the disagreements posed by Turkish-Cypriot representatives. The success of the PEO to re-establish itself as a representative body for the Cypriot workers was demonstrated by the invitation from the government to participate in the Consultative Assembly a few months later. Nevertheless, the proceedings of the Assembly also demonstrated the affiliation of the federation with AKEL, with the PEO aligning itself with the party's positions. That practice would be maintained in the following years.

Culmination of Labour Unrest and Inter-communal Solidarity

Following the establishment of the PEO, the organization of trade unionism was enhanced. The dynamics of the labour movement reached a peak in 1948. The period witnessed three major bi-communal strikes, marked by the cooperation between the PEO and the KTIBK. It also signalled the re-emergence of bitter confrontation between the PEO and the SEK, reflecting the conflict between the Left and the Right within Greek-Cypriot politics. The strikes lasted a total of 266 days and involved about 4300 workers – miners employed by the Cyprus Mines Corporation and the Cyprus and General Asbestos Company and builders. From early on, the action developed into violent confrontation on one hand between the strikers and the employers and the government, and on the other, between strikers and strike-breakers. All three strikes were harshly suppressed by the police, with strikers facing dismissals, prison sentences and even forced displacements. According to Pantelis Varnava, who had participated in the strike against the CMC, 76 persons (including 17 Turkish-Cypriots and 15 women – wives of strikers) were imprisoned for up to two years.¹⁸⁰ All three strikes ended with the partial achievement of the

¹⁷⁹ *Proceedings of the Fourth Pan-Cypriot Trade Union Conference*, 30-31 March 1946.

¹⁸⁰ Varnava, 2004, pp. 26-27.

workers' demands. They attracted a great deal of interest from all political forces of the island and received wide coverage in the local and international press.¹⁸¹

The strike at the mines operated by the CMC in the district of Nicosia occurred first and lasted from January to May 1948. It probably constituted the most highly contested labour dispute in Cyprus' history. The strike occurred in a highly polarized background, marked by the culmination of the Greek civil war, the election of ardent anti-communist Makarios II as Archbishop, and the passionate confrontation between the Cypriot Left and Right on the issue of the Consultative Assembly. As such, the strike itself soon took on a cold-war character.

In late December 1947, Robert Hendrix, serving as the representative of the CMC, rejected the workers' demand for renewing the 1946 contract, which had just expired. One of the first moves of the PEO after the CMC's decision was to approach the leadership of the KTIBK. A few days later, the two federations signed the Collaboration Protocol mentioned earlier. Committees from the two bodies and workers' assemblies worked on the set of demands to be put forward. These included an eight-hour workday, wage increases, the establishment of 13 working days every year as bank holidays, payment for overtime work and provision for better medical care.¹⁸² Following the rejection of the demands by the company, on 14 January, workers began a provisional five-day strike. The CMC reacted immediately; it suspended the distribution of milk to the workers' children, and ordered those patients who were able to move to leave the company clinic.¹⁸³ Following the end of the provisional strike, the workers' assemblies decided to move on to an indefinite strike.

In early February, a large meeting was held in Nicosia, with the participation of representatives of the PEO, AKEL and other left organizations; representatives of the KTIBK and the KTMBP; representatives of the SEK and the newspaper *Ethnos*; representatives of left-wing and Turkish-Cypriot newspapers; and representatives of the municipal councils of Nicosia, Famagusta and three villages.¹⁸⁴ Notably, the KEK and most right-wing newspapers declined the

¹⁸¹ The strikes were extensively covered in the *New York Times*. Their information was mainly supplied by Alexis Kyrou, permanent representative of Greece in New York and former Greek Consul in Cyprus. IAYE, 1948/88/1, Kyrou to the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 4 August 1948.

¹⁸² *Anexartitos*, 'The miners' struggle is starting', 3 January 1948.

¹⁸³ Moustaka, 2010, p. 315.

¹⁸⁴ IAYE, 1948/88/1, Greek Consul in Cyprus to the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, October 1948.

invitation to participate.¹⁸⁵ The SEK representative denounced the strike, as instigated by the communists, and called for its termination; all other participants signed a resolution in support of the strikers.

On 10 February, the PEO and the KTIBK called for a twenty-four hour general strike in support of the miners, while the PEO organized a fundraising campaign in support of the strike.¹⁸⁶ Throughout the month, strikers confronted strike-breakers who were being provided mainly by the SEK and moved to the mines under the protection of armed police. The clashes added to the already polarized climate within the population. In early March, the newspaper of the Bishopric of Kyrenia, *Efimeris* [Newspaper], came out in support of the strike-breaking actions. Its editorial stressed: 'MINERS! Kick the communists who exploit you and go back to work'.¹⁸⁷ During the same period, the Archbishop issued a circular denouncing the communists for instigating the strike and urging the miners to terminate it. Similar appeals were made by the Turkish-Cypriot mayor of Lefka.¹⁸⁸ It seems, however, that the escalation of the strike, the support of a great part of the population to the strikers and the harsh measures that the police took to protect the strike-breakers led to a decrease of the number of strike-breakers, with some of them eventually joining the strikers.¹⁸⁹

In April, the president of the CMC Henry Mudd arrived in person from the United States to start negotiations for the end of the strike. The failure of the negotiations led most Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot strikers to submit a memorandum to the government, calling for its mediation.¹⁹⁰ After a period of confrontation between all the involved parties, an agreement was finally reached in mid-May, with the achievement of part of the miners' demands.

Less than three months later, in early August, a second strike broke out, organized by miners employed by the General Asbestos Company. The company operated on Mount Troodos, located in the centre of the island. The strike lasted one month and involved 1000 out of 4000 workers in the mine. The action was supported by the PEO and opposed by the SEK, following a course similar to the CMC strike of the previous spring. Within a week of the strike, the police

¹⁸⁵ NA, FCO 141/2819, report 'Evidence of Nationalist opposition to AKEL in the strikes of 1948', 22 June 1949.

¹⁸⁶ *Anexartitos*, 'The miners' struggle', 10 February 1948.

¹⁸⁷ *Efimeris*, 'What the Lord awaits', 6 March 1948.

¹⁸⁸ *Ethnos*, 'Archiepiscopal Circular on the miners' strike', 21 March 1948.

¹⁸⁹ *Anexartitos*, 'The CMC's strike-breakers on the side of the miners', 17 April 1948.

¹⁹⁰ The memorandum was signed by 1323 Greek-Cypriot and 428 Turkish-Cypriot miners. Moustaka, 2010, p. 320.

had arrested approximately 100 strikers, who were sentenced to up to 40 days imprisonment. A prominent figure of the PEO was forced to leave the area of the mine on the company's order and with the consent of the colonial administration.¹⁹¹ Notably, as the strike coincided with the dissolution of the Consultative Assembly, the miners took part in the demonstrations in favour of self-government that AKEL was organizing at the time.¹⁹² Again, the director of the Asbestos Company was forced to come to an agreement with the strikers, and at the end of August the strike was terminated with the greater part of the miners' demands fulfilled.

Meanwhile, on 26 August, the pan-Cypriot trade union of builders, which was a member of the PEO, started a third strike. The strike involved around 800 workers, mainly in Nicosia. The builders were demanding a more favourable collective agreement with the contractors, which would replace the previous one, which had just expired. Again, with tensions rising in anticipation of the May 1949 municipal elections, the strike incited an acute confrontation between the PEO and the SEK as well as between the Left and the Right. Throughout the strike, the SEK supplied the contractors with strike-breakers, who were protected from attacks from strikers by the joint action of the police and members of the paramilitary organization Xhi. The violence escalated to the point where AKEL had to ask the Secretary of State to intervene.¹⁹³ In late October, the SEK signed a separate agreement with the contractors, forcing the PEO, which now faced great financial difficulties in supporting the strike, to follow a few weeks later. The new agreement provided for the equal employment of workers from both the PEO and the SEK and fulfilled only a few of the strikers' demands.

By the end of 1948, the schism within the labour movement had advanced significantly, and would be consolidated in the following years. At the same time, workers' participation in the SEK was growing, decreasing its relative disadvantage to the PEO. The polarization of Greek-Cypriot politics reached a peak in the period prior to the 1949 municipal elections, which signalled the prevalence of the ethnarchic enosist politics and the decrease of the Left's appeal within the community. Furthermore, the strengthening of nationalist politics within both AKEL

¹⁹¹ IAYE, 1948/88/1, Greek Consul in Cyprus to the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9 August 1948; *History of the PSE-PEO*, 1991, p. 144.

¹⁹² *Dimokratias (Democrat)*, 'Thousands of workers demonstrated their indignation in all Cyprus' towns', 3 August 1948.

¹⁹³ *Eleftheria*, 'On the side of the contractors', 19 August 1948; *Dimokratias*, 'An interesting case in Court', 2 November 1948; NA, CO 537/4309, appeal of the Democratic Organizations of Cyprus, December 1948.

and the Turkish-Cypriot leadership in the same period enhanced the ethnic divide in Cypriot society and prevented the effective collaboration between the PEO and the KTIBK in the following years. Nevertheless, the militancy of the bi-communal labour movement and AKEL, considered as the government's greatest adversary already since early 1945, alarmed the Colonial and the Foreign Office. Consequently, the British started to supply the Cyprus authorities with anti-communist propaganda, mainly from Greece, Turkey and Britain, to be published in the anti-communist and pro-government Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot newspapers on the island.¹⁹⁴

Most importantly, in April 1948, after the theft of about 20,000 sticks of dynamite during the CMC strike, the Security Intelligence Middle East (SIME) prepared a very detailed and well informed 90-page report on AKEL's activities. The report was then forwarded to the colonial authorities, the War Office and the Security Service (MI5).¹⁹⁵ It provided details on party membership; the origins, development and organization of the party; the organizations affiliated to it; its policy towards the government and the other political forces of the island; its methods of influencing the population; and its finances. Furthermore, the report stressed that in certain circumstances the government might have to proscribe AKEL or at least curb its activities and take action against its members, an assessment shared by the MI5 as well.¹⁹⁶

In that respect, in September of the same year, Governor Winster requested the Secretary of State to increase the size of the police force, and to appoint an officer trained in security-intelligence, to assist the government in its action against the party.¹⁹⁷ A few weeks later, the Police Adviser at the Colonial Office, a recently created post, arrived in Cyprus for a few days to supervise the police methods against communist agitation.¹⁹⁸ By the end of the year, more than 110 party cadres and members had been arrested and sentenced to various terms for participating

¹⁹⁴ Some of the material for publication by Cypriot newspapers had to be purchased by the Foreign Office, due to the copyright. Such was the case for the serial rights of George Orwell's *1984*, which were purchased for £25. NA, CO 537/6562, *Communism in Cyprus*, Foreign Office to Colonial Office, 16 May 1949; NA, CO 537/6563, *Communism in Cyprus: anti-communist propaganda*, Information Department to Foreign Office, 24 January 1950.

¹⁹⁵ NA, CO 537/2639, report by SIME on AKEL, 13 April 1948.

¹⁹⁶ NA, CO 537/2639, Robertson (MI5) to Logan (Colonial Office), 5 May 1948.

¹⁹⁷ NA, CO 537/2770, *Review of Colonial police and security forces in relation to Communist infiltration: Cyprus*, Governor Baron Winster to Secretary of State Creech Jones, 27 September 1948.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, Secretary of State's circular despatch, late 1948.

in labour protests and demonstrations in support of self-government.¹⁹⁹ In early 1949, the publication of the party newspaper *Dimokratis* [Democrat] was suspended for three months, and its editor was imprisoned for the same period, while the Acting Governor urged the district commissioners to be exceptionally and particularly harsh against the communists:

The opportunity should be taken to move against the communists wherever they exhibit weakness... You have been trained always to exercise your administrative powers in favour of the individual... The rule is a good one, but circumstances have now forced upon us an exception. Where the individual is a communist ... your attitude will cease to be helpful, and you will use your administrative powers to hamper and thwart the purpose of communism...²⁰⁰

The possibility of proscribing AKEL and its affiliated organizations was constantly discussed in the following period and by early 1950 cases against the party and the AON had been prepared.²⁰¹ Such a move would be constantly postponed, however, as the government wanted to avoid moving to open conflict with the Left at this stage.²⁰² For the time being, the colonial authorities' policy against AKEL consisted of the prosecution of individual party members for seditious publications in the press and for disturbance of the peace and in violent repression of demonstrations.

Conclusion

Despite the government's legal and administrative precautions and the use of repressive measures, the labour organizations, supported by the parties of the Left, managed to organize a large-scale labour movement that successfully appealed to broad sections of Cypriot society.

¹⁹⁹ NA, CO 537/4974, list of persons sentenced for taking part in the demonstrations of 18 November 1948; NA, CO 537/4045, *AKEL party*, Acting Governor to the Secretary of State, November and December 1948.

²⁰⁰ NA, CO 67/342/5, *Action against communist newspapers*, Acting Governor to the Secretary of State, 21 March 1949; NA, CO 537/4309, Acting Governor's opening of Commissioners' Conference, 11 February 1949.

²⁰¹ NA, FCO 141/3079, *proscription of AKEL; record of discussion in the Executive Council on 13 August 1949*. NA, FCO 141/3100, *procedure for proscribing political parties*, notes of meeting in Colonial Secretary's Office, 9 March 1950; report 'Overall action to be taken if it is decided to proscribe A.K.E.L. and its affiliated organizations', June 1951.

²⁰² The Governor further suggested that the Secretary of State prohibit the re-entry to Cyprus of communists who had or would leave the island, including the General Secretary of AKEL, Ezekias Papaioannou, and declare them as prohibited immigrants. The suggestion was rejected, on the grounds that it would cause international embarrassment to the British Government. NA, FCO 141/4121, *Cypriot communists abroad*, Governor Wright to Secretary of State Creech Jones, 26 January 1950; Secretary of State Jim Griffiths to the Governor, 28 August 1950.

After their initial appearance in Limassol during the second half of the 1920s, bi-communal labour mobilizations re-emerged during the second half of the 1930s and expanded to all towns and mining areas in the following decade. By the early 1940s, a new political space had been consolidated, that of the Left and the labour movement, and evolved into a threat to the established socio-political order. The social and political programme put forward by the trade unions and the Left ranged from the enactment of protective labour legislation to the democratization of the administration. The mass mobilization in support of these demands, which cut across ethnic and religious boundaries, was an historic event in the history of the island. By the end of the Second World War, AKEL had come to be seen as the most powerful adversary of the government, which sought to repress its activities. The party and its affiliated organizations and newspapers would ultimately be proscribed in 1955.

Throughout the period under scrutiny, the labour movement proved generally successful in scoring victories, even partially, in labour disputes. From the mid-1930s onwards, Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot workers and employees joined forces against the local, predominantly Greek-Cypriot, bourgeoisie – most significantly owners of mine companies and factories – and managed to achieve major concessions from their employers. As early as 1939, contractors and unionized workers of the Nicosia builders and builders' employees union signed the first collective agreement. In the face of labour mobilizations, the government was forced to redefine its policy on the labour regulatory framework on several occasions. In the early 1940s, the government recognized the PSE as the representative body of the island's trade unions, and enacted legislation that provided for a minimum wage. Although welfare state structures appeared in Cyprus only after independence, the enactment of the Social Insurance Law in 1956 constituted a major achievement of the labour movement's constant demands for protective labour legislation.

Furthermore, the labour movement and the trade unions, through which the KKK and AKEL channelled a great part of their action, constituted the main space of cooperation between the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot communities, challenging the nationalist politics of their leaderships. After the 1943 municipal elections, in an attempt to defend its economic and political interests, the Greek-Cypriot elite promoted a split in the PSE, which led to the formation of the nationalist and anti-communist SEK. The new body often aligned itself with employers

and provided strike-breakers in times of industrial action. Despite the growing polarization within Greek-Cypriot politics, however, membership in the SEK would only rise significantly at the end of the decade, and still insufficient to challenge the primacy of the PSE and its successor, the PEO, in the labour movement. Similarly, the decision of the nationalist modernist Turkish-Cypriot leadership to support the formation of separate Turkish-Cypriot trade unions in the same period was not followed by a sizeable secession of Turkish-Cypriot workers from the PSE. Nevertheless, it signalled the Turkish-Cypriot leadership's determination to define the community on an ethnic basis, and to detach it from communist influence. In the following years, the constantly growing dynamics of the labour mobilizations, the harsh labour conditions and the overall unwillingness of the government to meet labour demands allowed for the labour movement to retain its bi-communal character. In this context, in January 1948, the PEO and the KTIBK proceeded to sign the Collaboration Protocol, providing for cooperation between the two bodies and mutual support in promoting labour demands.

The close cooperation between the PEO and the KTIBK, however, was destined to be short-lived. As discussed in the previous chapters, in January 1949, one year after the signing of the Collaboration Protocol, the Central Committee of AKEL denounced the party's participation in the Consultative Assembly and the support the party had given to the idea of self-government. AKEL declared that from then on the only goal of the party was enosis. The new line of AKEL was widely covered in the left-wing press and was confirmed by the Sixth Congress of the party in August of the same year. With AKEL's shift, Greek-Cypriot politics on the national question were now homogenized, and the nationalist consensus would be demonstrated a few months later. In late 1949, AKEL would support the Church in organizing the enosist plebiscite, which was eventually held in January 1950. In the same period, in response to pro-enosis demonstrations organized by the Church and AKEL, the Turkish-Cypriot leadership organized its own demonstrations, denouncing enosis and self-government and demanding the restoration of Cyprus to Turkey if Britain left the island. The majority of the speakers at the demonstrations criticized AKEL, as well as the participation of Turkish-Cypriots in trade unions affiliated to the PEO, which had also supported the enosist plebiscite.²⁰³ In the following period, the nationalist politics of both the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot leaderships would become even stronger.

²⁰³ *Proceedings of the Seventh Pan-Cypriot Trade Union Conference*, 26-27 April 1952, pp. 50-51.

Although bi-communal labour mobilizations would continue, the consolidation of the ethnic divide in Cypriot society was not averted.

Conclusion

This study has sought to explore the political and social history of Cyprus during the 1930s and 1940s, while bringing in key background from the previous period, especially the second half of the 1920s. While exploring domestic politics and social transformations, it has focused on the colonial administrative policy on the island and has engaged with Britain's broader imperial planning, employing an approach that situates Cypriot colonial history within the history of British colonialism. Through the reconstitution and interpretation of historical structures and events of this period, this study has aimed at both contributing to scholarship by bridging an important gap in the existing literature, and suggesting an analysis that examines intra-communal and ethnic divides on their own terms, in contrast with the binary conceptualization of Cypriot history into a Greek-Cypriot and a Turkish-Cypriot side, dominant in the Cypriot historiography. Alas, the much smaller Maronite, Armenian, Latin Christian, Roma and Jewish minorities must be left for a future study.

Given the paucity of secondary sources on both the formation of Turkish-Cypriot politics and the history of the labour movement and the Left from 1925 to 1950, this study has suggested a narrative for these two themes; while others, most notably the politics of the Church, the formation of Greek-Cypriot nationalism and the colonial administrative policy, which have been in part examined by the literature – though the period 1931-1955 has been relatively neglected – have been re-examined here in the light of previously unexplored material. This has entailed some re-conceptualization of Cypriot history which allows for the understanding of the political and social dynamics that shaped Cypriot colonial history and set the context for subsequent historical developments. Indeed, the radical rift between the colonial state and the local population as well as between the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot communities during the last decade of British rule is traceable to the 1930s and 1940s.

In 1931, the outbreak of the October revolt, the most tangible manifestation of opposition to colonial rule, signalled the failure of the British to gain the loyalty of the local population. At the same time, the event provided an ideal opportunity for the colonial regime to suppress political activity in order to make Cyprus 'a real colony'. From then on, any demonstration of social discontent would be smothered, just as the popular outcry created by the government's

decision to override the Legislative Council's rejection of the budgetary estimates for 1932 was met by the abolition of the Council itself.

Most importantly, the revolt had a great, and at the same time paradoxical, impact on Cypriot politics. A culmination of the late 1920s mobilizations and primarily triggered by socio-economic and political factors, the revolt expressed major social discontent dating back to the previous period. Many Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot deputies were obliged to oppose the government, the former by resigning en masse from the Legislative Council on the eve of the uprising. The Greek-Cypriot nationalist elites and, most notably, the Church (the biggest landowner on the island), however, managed to hone the economic and socio-political demands of the insurgents into a single slogan: enosis. Hence, the revolt secured the power of the affluent Greek-Cypriot elites and, most significantly, enhanced the authority of the Church, all the while reinforcing enosis discourse. In other words, the Church managed to appropriate the revolt and harness the militant expression of popular discontent within its own political sphere. The Church thus represented itself as the political organization that could best express the demands of the Greek-Cypriot population by promoting union with Greece as the claim to encapsulate socioeconomic demands and anti-colonial politics. At the same time, the growing political consensus of the previous period between the Greek- and the Turkish-Cypriot leaderships in opposition to the government, rather than being reinforced through the revolt, decreased, widening the gap between the two communities.

Despite the apparent tensions in popular politics and the partial success of the British in forming a bi-communal, pro-government political class in the 1930s, the revival of the island's political life during the years of the war revealed that the political forces opposed to the colonial authorities were extending their influence among the population. In the end, the government failed in gaining the loyalty of the locals. During the 1930s and 1940s, Cypriot politics underwent several transformations, the outcome of which would largely define political developments until the end of colonial rule. The reinforcement of nationalist trends within Cypriot society, however, remained present throughout this period. Eventually, a nationalist political discourse was consolidated within both the Greek- and the Turkish-Cypriot communities.

In the years following the October revolt, the Church managed to promote successfully its nationalist politics, strengthening its position despite two major challenges against it: the restrictive framework imposed by the government and the politics of the Left. As in much of the British Empire, the Cyprus government, whilst proscribing the Communist Party and suppressing communist activity, maintained a more tolerant attitude towards trade unions during the 1930s. The government considered legal control of the unions as more effective in restricting the activities of the labour movement. In the early 1940s, the colonial authorities tolerated the foundation of AKEL, successor of the KKK. Yet, after the end of the war, the government pursued a repressive policy against the Left, this time prosecuting the trade union leadership directly. In spite of all this, the labour movement grew throughout this period and was consolidated by the early 1940s, achieving many of its demands for workers' rights and challenging nationalist politics. Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots participated in common trade unions and labour mobilizations, promoting class solidarity and challenging the ethnic dichotomy. Nevertheless, the Left eventually failed to form a political space rejecting the nationalist discourses of the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot leaderships. From its first steps, AKEL itself adopted and promoted the demand for enosis.

At the same time, the growing appeal of the Left alarmed the nationalist and anti-communist politicians from both communities. After AKEL's success in the 1943 municipal elections, Greek-Cypriot nationalist politicians moved to set up a right-wing party and anti-communist trade unions. Nevertheless, the right-wing political space was still dominated by the Church, preventing the formation of an organized secular right-wing politics. The appeal of the Cypriot National Party (KEK) and the Cyprus Workers' Confederation (SEK), both founded in this period, remained limited, failing to impede the increasing influence of the Left. Yet, their appearance signified the growing polarization of Greek-Cypriot politics. In the same period, the establishment of the Association of the Turkish Minority of the Island of Cyprus (KATAK) and the Turkish Cypriot National Union Party (KTMBP), as well as separate Turkish-Cypriot trade unions, signalled the growing nationalist division within Cypriot politics. Trade union leaderships found themselves increasingly under the supervision of political parties, and eventually adopted the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot nationalist discourses. This trend anticipated the end of extensive bi-communal politics and the failure of the labour movement to dissuade the communities from nationalism. Although the distinctively bi-communal character of the labour

movement was maintained until the end of the decade, significant domestic and international developments during the years after the war led to the strengthening of divisions within Cypriot society.

The confrontation between AKEL and the Greek-Cypriot nationalist elite as well as between the party and the colonial authorities would grow significantly after the end of the war. It was then that AKEL had come to be seen as the government's greatest adversary, especially after the outbreak of the Greek civil war in March 1946 and the party's success in the municipal elections two months later. Following the death of Leontios and the election of Makarios II as Archbishop in December 1947, anti-communism would be a constant component within Church discourse. In the same year, the ratification of the Truman Doctrine, which replaced Britain with the United States in providing military and economic aid to the Greek government, enabled the Greeks to support the demand for enosis more openly. In 1949, the Left was defeated in the municipal elections, mostly due to its participation in the Consultative Assembly with the slogan 'self-government – enosis'. AKEL then denounced its previous position and called for the intensification of the struggle for enosis. The homogenization of Greek-Cypriot nationalist politics was now complete, and any chances of cooperation between the Greek- and the Turkish-Cypriot communities were gone. Meanwhile, The Turkish-Cypriot leadership radicalized further its nationalist discourse and declared itself fundamentally against both enosis and communism. Following the 1950 plebiscite on enosis, which was organized by the Church and supported by the Left, as well as the subsequent attempts of the Greek-Cypriot leadership to internationalize the demand for enosis, the Turkish-Cypriot leadership sought the intervention of the Turkish government in support of its own demand for the restoration of Cyprus to Turkey in the case of Britain leaving the island. Turkish national policy on Cyprus was, however, determined by the priorities of its overall foreign policy, defined primarily by Turkey's incorporation into the US sphere of influence. In contrast with the Greek government, the introduction of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan in Turkey and, most notably, membership in NATO contributed to the formation of an officially intransigent stance towards the Turkish-Cypriot leadership until the mid-1950s.

As this thesis has sought to show, the nationalization of politics within the Greek- and the Turkish-Cypriot communities and, as would be demonstrated in the following decade, the

polarization of Cypriot society along ethnic lines, were anything but linear in their evolution. In fact, all political players were constantly redefining their positions and actions according to the changing social and political conjunctures and challenges.

Among the key political actors of the colonial period, the most influential was the Orthodox Church. Seeking to perpetuate its authority and secure its interests within the colonial context, the Church moved early on to redefine and modernize its politics. This institution adapted to the framework introduced by the British and claimed authority within it, taking advantage of the administrative division of the population into religious groups. The main political body through which the Church sought to maintain its authority under secular British rule was the Legislative Council, and the main political discourse which it came increasingly to employ was that of nationalism. By succeeding in the Legislative Council elections, the Church not only managed to maintain the political power it had during the Ottoman period as representative of the Orthodox Christian population, but also to modernize this power and enhance its authority within the British administrative context. At the same time, in its attempt to monopolize the politics of the Orthodox community, the Church strove to legitimize its authority in the name of the nation, so as to emerge as the unique, national authority of the community. Being the spiritual leader of the Orthodox Christian community, the Church, sought to become the political and national leader of the *Greek* community, incorporated into a secular administrative context. The revolt was, as this thesis suggests, a turning point in this process, which culminated during the 1933-1947 archiepiscopal question and was completed by the end of the 1940s. In the next decade, the Church would lead a militant, anti-colonial movement leading to the foundation of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960, the first president of which would be the Orthodox Archbishop. This seemingly paradoxical role of the Church of Cyprus that this thesis has sought to explore can be further analysed if contrasted with the politics of other ecclesiastical institutions in the British colonial context, a subject of future research.¹

Within the politics of the Church until the 1931 revolt, even calls for enosis were moderately expressed. The Church's stance towards the colonial state, largely reduced to

¹ For the most substantial comparative analysis of how the Orthodox Church of Cyprus and the Roman Catholic Church of Malta related with the colonial authorities, see Yiannos Katsourides and Antigone Heraclidou (eds.), 'Nationalism and Decolonisation in the Mediterranean; Cyprus and Malta compared, 1918-1964', in *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, 23/1 (2014).

demanding control over communal affairs, was not confrontational, and this policy was to a great extent maintained until the death of Archbishop Cyril in 1933. Rather than the colonial government, the main opponent of the Church was a political force that might threaten its influence over the Greek-Cypriot population. From the mid-1920s onwards, the secular political space being created by the Left challenged the politics of the Church. The Church, therefore, cooperated with the colonial authorities on several occasions against the Left, especially after the election of Archbishop Makarios II in December 1947.

In contrast with the Church, which claimed to represent the national interests of the entire Greek-Cypriot community, the Left claimed to represent the interests of the lower classes on the island. By the early 1940s, the Left had been consolidated, mainly through the trade unions and the labour movement, as a political force with a discourse challenging the established socio-political order. From the mid-1920s until the early 1940s, the Left rejected Greek-Cypriot nationalism and pursued class politics. Not only did the party of the Left, the KKK, denounce enosis and call for independence, but, more importantly, bi-communal politics was materializing in practice through the labour movement. The militant politics of trade unionism managed to mobilize large parts of the working population across ethnic and religious boundaries, constituting the main space of cooperation between the Greek- and the Turkish-Cypriot communities. Despite the radical shift on the national question during the 1940s - characterized by AKEL's abandonment of the claim for independence and the eventual adoption of enosis politics - the Left constantly promoted its modernist programme. By the end of colonial rule, the Left demanded a series of institutional reforms ranging from protective labour legislation to the democratization of Cypriot society as a whole (such as universal education for children and civil rights). Moreover, the dynamics of the Left shifted the entire spectrum of Cypriot politics, forcing rival political forces, especially the Greek-Cypriot elite, to adopt part of the Leftist discourse as early as the 1920s. Nevertheless, the appeal of the Left waned from the late 1940s onwards, as its main rival, the Church, had managed to emerge as the political force which defined the politics of the Greek-Cypriot community.

In contrast with the case of the Orthodox Church, the Muslim traditionalist elite, rather than modernizing its politics so as to adapt to the colonial administrative system, depended almost exclusively on the state to maintain its power. As under the Ottoman administration,

which secured the authority of Cyprus' confessional elites over their communities, the traditionalist Turkish-Cypriot elite stood as the most loyal ally to the new government. Given the advantageous position of the Greek-Cypriot community in the administration of the island and the growth of Greek-Cypriot nationalism, this Turkish-Cypriot alliance with the government prevented a further undermining of the community's political capital. The community's precarious position was only further exacerbated by the official annexation of Cyprus by Britain in 1914, the offer of the island to Greece the following year and the official recognition of Cyprus as a British territory in 1923 under the Treaty of Lausanne.

Although the British did not recognize most privileges of the Muslim traditionalist elite, the government greatly relied on this group's cooperation in administering the colony consensually. Besides, maintaining the division of the population into religious groups was as useful to the Muslim religious elite as it was to the Orthodox Church. Given the composition of the Legislative Council, the cooperation between the British officials and the Muslim deputies was the only means to overcome the Christian representatives – who usually voted as a block – and legislate without resorting to Orders in Council. From the mid-1920s, when a Kemalist and modernist political force was becoming ever more influential within the Turkish-Cypriot community, the government would enhance the position of the traditionalist elite, granting it complete control over communal affairs. The cooperation between the government and the traditionalist Turkish-Cypriot elite was thus mutually beneficial, securing, for the former, the governance of the island, and ensuring the authority of the latter over the community.

As with the Greek-Cypriot community, the greatest challenge to the influence of the traditionalist Turkish-Cypriot elite – and, thus, the government's administrative planning – came from a secular, modernist political force. By the end of the 1920s, the Kemalist Turkish-Cypriot intelligentsia had managed to form a distinct political space, opposing the traditionalist power structure of the community, and increasingly promoting nationalist politics. Although calls for the modernization of Turkish-Cypriot communal affairs provided some common ground with the Left, cooperation with this new Turkish-Cypriot political force was generally precluded, mainly due to its nationalist and anti-communist ideology. Besides, the modernist platforms suggested by both political movements met the general resistance of the government when implementing reforms.

In contrast with the Orthodox Church, and despite the government's best efforts, the traditionalist Turkish-Cypriot elite lagged behind the modernist Turkish-Cypriot leadership, which had prevailed by the early 1940s. Until the end of colonial rule, the new modernist leadership would constantly demand reforms, communal autonomy, equal treatment of the Turkish- and the Greek-Cypriot communities, and restoration of Cyprus to Turkey in case of any change of the status quo on the island. Towards the end of the decade, the radicalization of Greek-Cypriot nationalism and the adoption of the enosis discourse by all Greek-Cypriot political forces forged an increasing understanding between both the modernist leadership and the government, as well as a consensus between the former and the traditionalist Turkish-Cypriot elite, leading to the consolidation and homogenization of the nationalist politics of the community as well as a consensus on political and administrative matters. By the beginning of the 1950s, the British had begun to consider the usefulness of Turkish-Cypriot nationalism against the radical enosis Greek-Cypriot politics.

As this thesis has demonstrated, however, the radical rift between the colonial state and the Greek-Cypriots, which the British strove to avert in the years following the 1931 revolt, had become irreversible. Despite the government's repressive measures, political activity on the island increased in both communities, marking the failure of Britain's policy to make Cyprus 'a real colony'. By 1950, the politics of the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot nationalist leaderships had proved successful. AKEL and the traditionalist Turkish-Cypriot elite had by then adopted nationalist politics, and nationalist ideology was now dominant within Cypriot society. If government policy until the end of the 1940s constituted an ill-fated attempt to control nationalist politics, the labour movement proved unable to avert the ethnic divide at the grassroots level. Nationalist ideology was soon to be translated into action. In April 1955, the Greek-Cypriot Εθνική Οργάνωσις Κυπρίων Αγωνιστών [National Organization of Cypriot Fighters – EOKA] would initiate its five-year armed campaign for enosis. A few months later, the Turkish-Cypriot organization Volkan [Volcano] was founded, eventually replaced by the Türk Mukavemet Teşkilatı [Turkish Resistance Organization – TMT] in November 1957, demanding *taksim*, or the partition of Cyprus. These events would shape the future of the island in highly damaging ways.

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Appendices

High Commissioners of Cyprus (1878 - 1925)

Garnet Joseph Wolseley (July 1878 – June 1879)

Robert Biddulph (June 1879 – March 1886)

Henry Ernest Gascoyne Bulwer (March 1886 – April 1892)

Walter Joseph Sendall (April 1892 – April 1898)

William Frederick Haynes Smith (April 1898 – October 1904)

Charles Anthony King-Harman (October 1904 – October 1911)

Hamilton Goold-Adams (October 1911 – January 1915)

John Eugene Clauson (January 1915 – December 1918)

Malcolm Stevenson (December 1918 – March 1925)

Governors of Cyprus (1925 - 1950)

Malcolm Stevenson (March 1925 – November 1926)

Ronald Storrs (November 1926 – October 1932)

Reginald Edward Stubbs (October 1932 – November 1933)

Herbert Richmond Palmer (November 1933 – July 1939)

William Denis Battershill (July 1939 – October 1941)

Charles Campbell Woolley (October 1941 – October 1946)

Reginald Fletcher, 1st Baron Winster (October 1946 – August 1949)

Sir Andrew Barkworth Wright (August 1949 – 1954)

Archbishops of Cyprus (1878 - 1950)

Sophronios (October 1865 – May 1900)

[May 1900 – 1909: vacancy of the See]

Cyril II (1909 – July 1916)

Cyril III (November 1916 – November 1933)

[November 1933 – June 1947: vacancy of the See]

Leontios (June 1947 – July 1947)

Makarios II (December 1947 – June 1950)